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A WALK

THROUGH SOME OF THE

WESTERN COUNTIES

OF

ENGLAND.

PRICE 7s.

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Berry Pomeroy Castle, Devonshire.

1800, Published as the Act directs, by R. Cruttwell, Bath.

A WALK

Ann Blount.

THROUGH SOME OF THE

WESTERN COUNTIES

OF

ENGLAND.

BY THE

Rev^d. Richard Warner,

OF BATH.

Σα γαρ εστι κοινα παντα.

"Creation's Tenant, all the world is thine!"

BATH, PRINTED BY R. CRUTTWELL;
AND SOLD BY
G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

1800.

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To Glastonbury	6
Wookey	5
Cheddar	7
Through the Cliffs and back	2
East and South-Brent	8
Paulet	7
Passage-House	2½
Cummidge over the Passage	½
Stoke-Courcey	4
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Minehead	4
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Ilfracomb	5
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Chudleigh	4
Newton-Bushell	8
Totness	7
Darlington, and back	3
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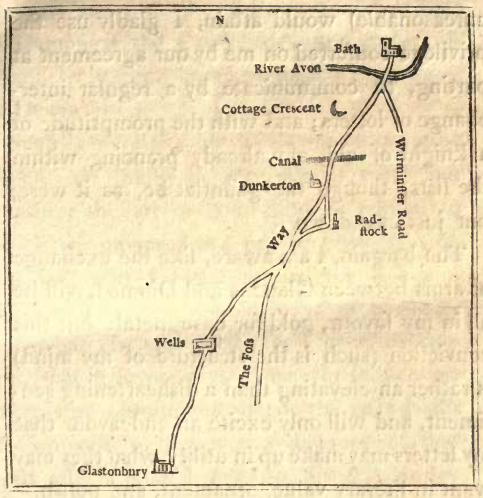


LETTER I.

To Wm. JOHNSTON, esq.

DEAR SIR, *Glastonbury, Sept. 2d. 1799.*

THOUGH the pleasure of your correspondence will by no means be an adequate compensation for the loss of your society, yet, as it is one of my maxims, not churlishly to reject the *good* which is *before* me, because I cannot reach that which my wishes, (perhaps

unreasonable) would attain, I gladly use the privilege conferred on me by our agreement at parting, to communicate by a regular interchange of letters; and with the promptitude of a knight of old, am already prancing within the lists, though the gauntlet be, as it were, but just cast down.

The bargain, I am aware, like the exchange of arms between Glaucus and Diomed, will be all in my favour, gold for base metal: but this conviction (such is the structure of my mind) is rather an elevating than a disheartening sentiment, and will only excite an endeavour that my letters may make up in utility, what they may want in literary value, ornament, and polish.

Should fortune be propitious, and after the long series of inclement weather which we have experienced, indulge us with a few weeks of cloudless skies, I may at least promise you some variety, and perchance some novelty also; since it is my intention to carry you through the "labouring orchards" of Somersetshire; to sink you full many a fathom deep into the mines of Cornwall; to lead you along the crags of the Danmonian shore,

"Where the great vision of the guarded mount
"Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold;"

to ferry you over the Belerian Sea, bewilder you amongst the Cassiterides, and at length conduct you safely home through the rich vales of Devonshire.

Such is my plan; but as its execution must depend on things so uncertain as wind and weather, the art of controlling or regulating which we moderns are not in possession of, you will not, I hope, accuse me either of idleness or caprice, should it be of necessity somewhat circumscribed: for I candidly confess, that halcyon days alone will induce me to cross in solitude and silence the naked hills of Cornwall, or tempt the dangers of that strait which proved fatal to Sir Cloudesley Shovel.

Hitherto all has been fair and flattering; the morning, soft and serene, invited me from my pillow before sun-rise, and at five o'clock I was winding up the first long hill on the road to Wells. It would have argued want of feeling and taste, not to spend a few minutes in contemplating the striking scene which here unfolded itself. The fogs of night floated over the deep valley beneath me, and filling all its windings, presented only one wide sheet of vapour, save that the shadowy forms of the ob-

jects which it involved, ("uncertain if beheld") were occasionally descried, when the breeze of morning disturbed and dissipated for a moment its misty volumes. Soon, however, the sun rising in his strength began to strive for the mastery, to struggle for the empire of the day. Nor was the contest long: the cloudy mantle quickly shrunk before the splendour of his beams, and melted into air, whilst a gay and varied scene of woods and hills, fields and villages, rose in the distance; and immediately beneath me the most beautiful city in the world, its proud turrets tipped with gold, emerged into sight.

Admiring the grand vision with which nature thus regaled me, I proceeded to *Cottage-Crescent*, a curved range of small houses, running at right angles with the road towards the brow of Oddown-hill.

Though my mind was not much in unison with the *ludicrous*, it was impossible to avoid smiling at the complicated absurdities into which the architect has plunged himself by the imposition of this unfortunate name on his cluster of tenements. Had he studiously rummaged the vocabulary for two terms the most discordant and heterogeneous, and the most

incompatible with the spot to which they were to be applied, he would not have succeeded so well as he has done, in selecting what he conceived to be the most appropriate. The *cottage*, you know, modestly retiring from the sight, seeks the covert and the glen; and more than half its interest arises from that appearance of quiet, seclusion, and simplicity, which it must indispensably possess. Instead of attaching itself to a cluster of other buildings, it affects *individuality*; and far from impudently exposing itself on the bare unwooded side of a lofty hill, (the situation of the houses before us) conceals its beauties from the publick gaze, and only discloses them to the eye of taste and curiosity. Possibly, however, the architect in the present instance conceived that *smallness* and *inconvenience* were the only requisites to make a cottage; the idea of a *near neighbourhood*, also, being necessary to a building of this description (equally *correct* with the former conception) induced him to *groupe* his *tenements* together: and the *form* and *cognomen* were as *happily* suggested by the magnificent piles which bear a similar appellation, and rise in all the pride of modern architecture over against him, on the opposite side of the river.

The *entrance*, also, is managed in the same style of *good design*. Two well-wrought Sphinxes propose to the traveller a question, which even Œdipus himself could not satisfactorily answer, "for what purpose are we placed here?" whilst a *Mercury*, having stolen the trumpet of *Fame* (for you know he is a thievish god)

"Quicquid placuit jocoso
"Condere furto,"

proclaims to the world that there are no limits to the vicious conceptions, mal-associations, and wild incongruities of *false taste*.

As I continued to ascend the hill, the view became more extensive and diversified; the whole vale of Bath discovered itself to the right, through which the Avon stole in silent meanders; and the swelling grounds which rise finely from its margin, spangled with seats and hamlets, presented an ornamented picture that stretched quite to the high grounds of Clifton.

On the other hand, the mingled scenery of Comb-Hay, hill and dale, wood and dingle, threw in a fair claim to attention; whilst the song of the reapers busily and cheerfully employed in the corn-fields on either side, and the strains of early birds, chanting their grateful matins to the orb of day for the return of his

genial rays, reminded me not to exhaust my admiration on the inanimate parts of creation alone.

To this general appearance of beauty and happiness the only interruption arose from *Man*. Prone alike to mar the natural harmony of the world, and to delight in moral discord, his mischievous pursuits discoloured the canvas, and stained the lovely picture with blood and slaughter.

Unfortunately, the inclemency of the weather had hitherto prevented the *sportsman* from availing himself of that *licence to destroy*, which the legislature allows on the first of September; taking advantage, therefore, of the only fine morning which had hitherto occurred, he had already possessed himself of the fields, and the thunder of his gun echoed on every side of me.

To reprobate "this falsely-cheerful barbarous game of death," would be as useless as unpopular: to you, however, whose sentiments on the subject so exactly coincide with my own, I may venture to lament that strange perverseness which leads man to build his chief amusements on the sufferings, rather than the happiness, of the brute creation. Neither goaded by necessity, nor actuated by the principle of self-

defence, wherever his rural reign extends, as he marks the spot with devastation; the dying hare pants before his dogs; the feathered tenant of the sky falls before his gun; and the defenceless worm writhes upon his hook. The steady tyrant of the field, whilst he rejoices at the havock he has made, smiles over the bloody quarry, and cries "Am I not in sport?"

"Upbraid, ye rav'ning tribes! our wanton rage,
"For hunger kindles you, and lawless want;
"But lavish-fed, in nature's bounty roll'd,
"To joy at anguish, and delight in blood,
"Is what your horrid bosoms never knew."

The road, dropping down a long hill, led me now towards Dunkerton; a small and retired village to the right, five miles from Bath, bedded in the bosom of a deep valley, and only to be discovered by the tower of its church peeping through the woods.

Here that noble monument of Roman labour, called the *Fosse-Way*, crosses the road nearly at right angles in its course from Comb-Hay to Dunkerton. Immediately in the neighbourhood of the turnpike, the operations of husbandry have depressed, and indeed obliterated in many places, this grand vicinal Dorsum; but deviating about half a mile to the left, I

enjoyed a view of it in all its pristine magnificence, carrying its indelible crest to a considerable height, and flanked on each side by a deep ditch or fosse.

Marked out at first by the sword of the conqueror, the Roman military ways are neither bent into curves, nor broken into angles, by the intervention of private property, nor by any regard to the interest of individuals; but where no natural barrier opposed itself, they push themselves forwards in a direct line to the point where they are to terminate. The fosse-way is an example of their judicious mode of laying out a road, running upwards of seventy miles in an undeviating straight course from Bath to Perry-Street on the southern confines of Devonshire; and passing through Stratton, Shepton-Mallet, Somerton, and Ilchester.

Three miles farther on the Wells road I perceived the same military way again approaching the turnpike, which it accompanies in a parallel direction for a considerable distance, sufficiently visible even to the eye not gifted with antiquarian keenness. The village, indeed, at this spot receives its name from this venerable neighbour, *Radstock* being nothing more than the *Hamlet of the Road.*

Here a sudden alteration took place in the scene, which changed from rural simplicity and quiet to jargon and noise: the dingy tenants of the coal-mines in the vicinity were busily employed at the publick-house, either in taking their "morning rouse," or concluding the festivities of the preceding night, and the village rang with curses and vociferations. Like true tipplers, their courage had risen in proportion to the depth of their draughts; and when I saw them, they were

> "So full of valour, that they smote the air
> "For breathing in their faces; beat the ground
> "For kissing of their feet."

I therefore climbed the opposite hill as rapidly as I could, not only to avoid the sounds of discord and confusion that distracted my mind, but also to escape some of the blows which I saw were dealt about with great activity amongst these early carousers. A canal terminating at this place is now cutting, and in great forwardness, intended to convey the produce of the mines to Bath and more distant places. This is very considerable, amounting on an average to 10,000 bushels per week, and sold at the pit's mouth at the rate of 5d. per bushel. The indefatigable labour of man has

already followed the vein to the depth of two hundred and seventy feet.

Pursuing the fields which skirt the turnpike-road, after a two hours' indolent saunter I found myself at Embrow lake, a noble sheet of water flooding a superficies of ten acres, and surrounded by steep banks richly covered with sycamores, firs, and beech trees. The spot is sequestered and pleasing, and possesses what the late Mr. Brown emphatically called "a capability" of being converted into a picture of very superior beauty.

Mendip hills, the mountains of Somersetshire, now began to rear themselves on the right hand, and formed a side-screen quite to Wells. Black and barren, they hold out nothing to appearance delightful or inviting; but this rough external conceals within it prodigious riches—lime-stone, calamine, and lead, in inexhaustible plenty. Upwards of two centuries ago, as Fuller tells us, the revenues of the bishops of Bath and Wells were considerably enlarged by the profits of these mines; and since that period, they have continued to be worked, with equal advantage, by the private adventurers into whose hands they have fallen.

Here too the rugged surface, unbroken by the hand of the husbandman,

"Non rastris hominum, non ulli obnoxia curæ,"

presents to the eye of the antiquary in fine preservation the labours of distant ages; and as he marks the barrow, or treads the earth-works scattered over these hills, he may indulge himself in all the reveries of British archæology; and please his fancy with discriminating between the vallations of the Celtic aborigenes, and the huge mounds of their Saxon invaders.

Altho' I was upon high ground, and within two miles of Wells, it had hitherto escaped my observation, for snugly seated under a limb of Mendip, it is not perceived till very nearly approached. But the view to the left, and in front, sufficiently supplied this deficiency: Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Wiltshire, here offer their hills and plains to the traveller, whose eye embraces an extensive circle of country, the diameter of which must be upwards of sixty miles. The tor of Glastonbury* proudly crowning one of the lofty conoidal hills which swell suddenly

* The edifice here mentioned is the tower of a church, dedicated to St. Michael, built at the conclusion of the 13th century The church has been long since destroyed.

out of this widely-spread champaign, makes the most conspicuous object in the diversified picture.

A long and gently-descending hill conducted me into Wells, and passing under two noble old gate-ways, which separate the close from the suburbs and the city, I reached the Swan inn to a late breakfast.

Surrounded with curiosity and antiquity, it was difficult to determine what object should first engage my attention in this venerable place. My propensity for ecclesiastical architecture led me however immediately to the cathedral, a rich repast for those whose taste points to that pursuit. This edifice stands at the eastern extremity of the city, and is built in the form of a cross; having a noble square tower, which rises at the intersection of the transepts with the body of the church, and two other towers, lower and of smaller dimensions, springing at the north and south sides of the western end. Having been built at different periods, some little dissimilarity occurs in the architecture; the heavy hand of the Saxon artist may be discovered in the eastern members, whilst the western parts display a magnificent example of the richest and most superb Go-

thick masonry, the work of the 13th century, under the splendid auspices of Joceline de Welles, the 21st bishop of this see.

The ornaments here consist of Gothick canopies or niches, of light and airy design, supported by slender shafts of the Purbeck marble, enriched with costly capitals running in horizontal ranges one above another, round the whole western end and its accompanying towers. In these are placed the statues of dumb apostles, tranquil pontiffs, harmless heroes, and unambitious kings and queens.

The figures of the apostles occupy the highest tier of these recesses. The lowest line of sculpture exhibits a whimsical specimen of Gothick taste in the way of design: the general resurrection is the subject of the artist's chissel, but the grotesque and monstrous appearance of the figures, which are starting from their temporary mansions of dust, evinces that he had not considered it with the awe and seriousness it so well deserves.

A sepulchral inscription appears on the left side of the western door, cut partly in uncial letters of the 14th century, commemorating the rector of Pitney, John Bennet, who died 1428. The letters now visible are as follow:

✠ PVRL. ALME : IOHAN :
DE : PVTTEDIE PRIES :
ET : TRESE : IVRS : DE :

Pur l'alme Johan. de Puttedie pries et trese jurs de ——.

The multiplicity of figures which decorate the western end of Wells cathedral; the beauty of the niches wherein they stand enshrined; the light appearance of the pillars, detached from the wall and from each other, combine to form the most splendid and agreeable example of Gothick ecclesiastical architecture I have ever seen. But I do not think the inside at all equal to this magnificent external. Here the massive Saxon prevails, and setting apart the choir and the elegant chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary at the eastern extremity, *heaviness* may, perhaps, be considered as its chief characteristick.

Bishops and dignitaries occupy in profusion the consecrated dust covered by this noble pile, most of the internal decorations of which consist of monumental erections to their memory. Here Ina, of legislative fame, the first founder of the church, is said to repose; and here, also, the bishops Brithelm and Kineward, Ethelwyn and Birthwyn, occupy their last narrow dwellings; of whom little more is now known than

that they were mitred Saxons. Chapels and chantries ensure to some of the prelates entombed beneath them, a reprieve from immediate oblivion; whilst the large flat monumental stones, their inscriptions defaced by the foot of the thoughtless passenger, only notify that *somebody* sleeps under them, whose importance, perchance, in the day when he flourished, seemed to promise he would not as hastily be forgotten.

The northern transept contains a curious old specimen of the *Ars Horologica*, or ancient clock-making. It is a dial, constructed by a monk of Glastonbury, called Peter Lightfoot, about the year 1325, of complicated design, and ingenious execution. On its face the changes of the moon, and other astronomical particulars, are contrived to be represented; and an horizontal frame-work at the summit of the dial exhibits, by the aid of machinery, a party of knights, armed for the tournay, pursuing each other on horse-back with a rapid rotatory motion.

Connected with the cathedral is the chapter-house, an octagonal building, remarkable only for the beautiful clustered shaft of Purbeck marble, which rising from the centre of the area, ramifies above into many slender ribs supporting the roof of the edifice.

The cloister also, on the south side of the cathedral, constructed for the contemplative walks of the monasticks in rainy weather, is of good design. Over the eastern division runs the episcopal library, a large but neither valuable nor select collection of books, in which we find none of the curious contents of the ancient scriptorium, save two imperfect MS. one (apparently) of the 13th, and the other of the 15th century. It is but justice, however, to the Dean and Chapter, and to the servants of the cathedral, to confess that the whole of this extensive pile is kept in the most exact order and greatest neatness.

The external appearance of the Bishop's palace, with its battlements and moats, its gates and redoubts, conveys the idea of the sullen retreat of an ancient feudal chieftain, rather than what it really is, the elegant mansion of of modern courtesy and literary taste. When one contemplates the scite of its ancient hall, which formerly stretched on the south side of of the court or area, in length 120 feet, and in breadth 70,* the scene of old hospitality, where, on the frequently recurring festival, " the

* Leland. Itin. ii. 70.

beards wagged all," where each chin shone with the lard of the buttery, and each nose reddened with the strong ale of the cellar, we are almost tempted to scold the all-grasping Henry VIII. for putting a period to such merriment; but feel still more indignant with the hypocritical or fanatical republicans of the last century, who wantonly reduced to ruins what the royal cormorant had spared—the walls which had in times of yore been consecrated to good-living.

Wells, though a clean and handsome town, is entirely indebted for all its *grandeur* to the munificence of its old ecclesiasticks. One elegant modern structure, however, would have been a great ornament to the place, had a slight alteration been made in its plan: it is a conduit rising on the spot where a beautiful hexagonal building of the same nature, erected by Bishop Beckington, previously stood. The taste and design of it are, in my opinion, faultless; but its *shape*, which is *triangular*, gives it a sort of *thinness* highly disagreeable to the eye.

A flat road, intersecting what for the most part formerly was nothing but a spongy moor, stretches in nearly a straight line from Wells to Glastonbury, affording no object of interest

or curiosity. But this deficiency was amply made up on my entrance into the town, which justly boasts itself as one of the oldest in England. Here vestiges of ancient magnificence appeared on every side, and prepared me for the ruins of the immense abbey, from which I am just returned. Mouldings of portals, capitals of pilasters, and stone ribs of roofs, the spoil of edifices once august, are stuck in the walls of the ignoble residences of modern times; and scarcely can the traveller take a step, without being reminded by some fragment of masonry, or some ancient mansion with its arched portal and its spandrilled windows, that Glastonbury has suffered a most lamentable reverse of fortune.

On passing down the street, the church of St. John attracted my attention, particularly its tower, which is wonderfully light and beautiful. Indeed a peculiar good taste in the design of church towers seems to pervade the greatest part of Somersetshire, arising, probably, from their being all copies of some excellent original. This of St. John's appears to have been formerly ornamented in a very superior stile. The weight of its battlements is much relieved by perpendicular lancet-like perfora-

tions, which add considerably to its lightness; and its lower division has handsome Gothick niches for the reception of statues as large as life. Of these figures, which appear to be clericks robed in their vestments, only five now remain; three on the south, and two on the west side of the tower: the tenants of the northern niches are removed. A superb sharply-pointed arch forms the western entrance into the church, consisting of many mouldings, in one of the intervals between which runs a rich pattern of wreathed tendrils, bearing leaves and flowers. The spandrils of the door-way contain the representation of a lamb with a flag, the apocalyptical emblem of the saint to whom the church is dedicated; and a pelican feeding its own young, referring to the neighbouring Abbey of Glastonbury.

Somewhat further down the street on the same side, a most curious old stone edifice offered a claim to my notice. The lofty gateway, and a vast projecting mass of stone-work on which the sign is hung, sufficiently evinced that it had been long intended for a house of publick reception; and as it appeared to be at present applied to the same purposes, underthe auspices of that worthy christian knight

St. George, I entered its venerable walls, and deposited my baggage on an old oaken table, that seemed to be nearly coeval with the building. Having refreshed myself with gammon and ale sufficiently good for an abbot's table, and made arrangements for my nocturnal board and repose, I strolled out to survey the outside of my caravansary; the remainder of the town, and the ruins of its monastery. The George Inn, for so it is named, was built in the fifteenth century, for the use and entertainment of the numerous pilgrims who visited the shrines and relicks of Glastonbury, and the holy thorn which grew in its neighbourhood. Its front has a flat projecting bow on each side of the gateway, the whole of it ornamented with little niches, curious sculptures, and armorial bearings. Amongst these may be distinguished the arms of several abbots; a chevron, engrailed *azure* between three crosses *gules*; per pale *vert* and *azure*; per pale *azure* and *gules*. The summit of the house is turreted, and the spaces between the battlements seem formerly to have been adorned with human figures of stone. Only two of these are now remaining; their heads inclined downwards, as if they were observing the guests as they entered the gateway.

Whether the many *female* devotees, who under the reign of Romish superstition travelled to Glastonbury, and reposed themselves at the *George Inn*, came *solely* for the purpose of visiting the tombs of the saints or the miraculous tree of Joseph, is rendered rather problematical, by a secret passage (discovered many years since) connecting this *Hospitium* with the Abbey. It lies immediately under the house, pursues its subterraneous course quite to the opposite side of the town, reaches the monastery, and there terminates—not at the chapel of a patron saint, or the mausoleum of a pious founder, but—at a short flight of steps, which ascended formerly to the *bed-chamber* of my *Lord Abbot!!!*

In my way to the Abbey I passed the market-cross, an old polygonal structure, its apex crowned with a little naked figure, bearing strong marks in its position and employment of that grossness of taste in which the sculptors of the 15th century so frequently indulged. A little to the south of this lie the remains of the Abbey, on the left hand side of the road leading from Wells to Bridgwater.

To him who is fond of amusing his mind with investigating the relicks of ancient ecclesiastical architecture, these ruins will afford a

very rich regale; for though time and plunder have spared but little, yet that little exhibits some exquisite specimens of sculptural skill. An extensive plot of sixty acres, part of the tract anciently called the Isle of Avalon, (because in distant days the sea flowed up and covered all the flat lands surrounding it) formed the scite of Glastonbury Monastery; which, with its various offices and buildings, completely occupied the large inclosure. But of these edifices a small part of the church, fragments of Joseph's chapel, the abbot's kitchen, and some unintelligible and dilapidated walls, are all which now survive. Nor indeed are these remarkable for picturesque effect: the flat uniformity of the meadow ground on which they stand, and the circumstances of their being destitute of surrounding wood, (save a few shabby apple-trees) and not sufficiently relieved by that necessary accompaniment of ruins, some good masses of ivy, detract much from their *interest* as well as beauty. The contemplative wanderer, who loves "to walk the studious cloisters' pale" of ruined religious edifices, covets also the gloomy shade of high-arched trees, which throw an appearance of solitude and seclusion around him, and promote con-

centration of thought and abstract reflexion. The eye, moreover, is fatigued and disgusted at surveying a lengthened mass of stone wall with no resting-place, no spot of green to repose on, and relieve it with that delightful mixture,

> "United light and shade, where the sight dwells
> "With growing strength, and ever new delight."

This agreeable variety, however, is by no means wanting in the chapel of St. Joseph, which is ornamented with that happy proportion of it, which just softens down and corrects the light colour of the materials of the building, without obscuring its exquisite beauties. Of this chapel I can only say, that it carries architectural elegance to a pitch beyond what my fancy had ever conceived the mason's art could extend to. Its stile is mixed, partly Anglo-Norman or (as it is commonly called) Saxon, and partly Gothick, both perfect in their kind. A range of windows, rather loftily placed, runs round the building; their arches, of semicircular form, but included within sharply-pointed Gothick cornices: beneath these, at proper intervals, and equal distances, light taper shafts support a course of false *Saxon* arches; which *intersecting* each other, form well-proportioned

Gothick ones, and perhaps point out the *origin* of this much-disputed stile. The little ornamental cornices edging the arches of the windows are in the zig-zag manner, but being of what is called *raised work*, that is, separated from the mass of stone by the labour of the chissel, the light is admitted through these perforations, and an unequalled degree of airiness and elegance thrown, by these means, over the whole structure. Nor is it possible to pass the northern entrance without admiration, for here the builder seems to have exerted all the efforts of his art in order to produce an architectural wonder. The retiring arches which form the door-way, are supported by slender pillars, surmounted with magnificent capitals, the mouldings separated from each other by four compartments of costly carving, all which exhibit splendid but tasty running patterns of foliage and fruit, tendrils and flowers, entwining each other in the richest profusion. A handsome crypt runs under the eastern part of the chapel.

Time and rapine, violence and gradual decay, have made still more deplorable havock in the great church—a mighty fabrick, the building of which alone must have exhausted

a quarry. Imagine, my dear sir, a cathedral extending in length from east to west 420 feet, spreading its transepts to the breadth of 135, rising to a sublime height, adorned with innumerable rich shrines "antic pillars," sculptured windows, and painted glass, the whole executed in the purest Gothick style, and finished with the most elaborate art; let your fancy, I repeat, represent a building like this, and you will have before you such a splendid cathedral as once existed at Glastonbury. Then let the *busy workman* go on, and *people* this enormous edifice; let him introduce 500 monks, the regal train of the Lord Abbot, pacing its consecrated pavement in gorgeous procession at the solemn hour of midnight, and illuminating its high-arched roof with a thousand flaming tapers: bid him strike the pealing organ, and swell the note of praise in one grand chorus from the assembled multitude, and he will add to his first picture, the most impressive of all religious services, the celebration of a nocturnal mass by the Abbot and his dependant monks.

To me, who contemplate with particular pleasure the ancient ecclesiastical architecture of this kingdom, and admire the *pageantry* of

the Romish ritual, though I lament the *purposes* to which it is applied, scenes like the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey afford considerable gratification. My imagination readily enters into "the deeds of the days of other years;" and while I tread the hallowed spot, reverts with ease to, and interests itself in the transactions which it has witnessed, the grandeur it has exhibited, the vicissitudes it has suffered. Nor am I at pains to check this mental delusion, since I hold it to be an incontrovertible axiom, that man is ever the better for seriousness and contemplation. Were an authority required for a truth so self-evident, I could not offer a better than a passage from your favourite author, the first of English moralists, a passage that deserves to be written in letters of gold, and is worthy to be inscribed on every heart. "To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us in-

different and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon; or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

A long list of kings, queens, and heroes, mingle their dust under the ruins of this great church, amongst whom the name of the patriot ARTHUR must not be forgotten. Borne to Glastonbury after the fatal battle of Camlan, in which he perished, the chieftain was buried before the high altar, where he slept for ages neglected and unknown. A tradition, however, of his death and place of sepulture was preserved among the British bards who took shelter in the mountains of Wales, after the conquest of their country by the Saxons. One of these poets, in a legend which he recited to Henry the IId, discovered the long-concealed secret. Take the tenor of his song in the spirited strains of a legitimate son of poesy:—

" HENRY! I a tale unfold
" Never yet in rhime enroll'd,
" Nor sung nor harp'd in hall or bow'r;
" Which in my youth's full early flow'r
" A Minstrel, sprung of Cornish line,
" Who spoke of kings from old Locrine,

" Taught me to chaunt one vernal dawn,
" Deep in a cliff-encircl'd lawn,
" What time the gliff'ning vapours fled
" From cloud-envelop'd Glyder's head,
" And on its sides the torrent grey
" Shone to the morning's orient ray;
" When Arthur bow'd his haughty crest,
" No princess, veiled in azure vest,
" Snatch'd him by Merlin's potent spell,
" In groves of golden bliss to dwell;
" Where, crown'd with wreaths of misletoe,
" Slaughter'd kings in glory go;
" But when he fell, with winged speed,
" His champions on a milk-white steed
" From the battle's hurricane
" Bore him to Joseph's tower'd fane,
" In the fair vale of Avalon;
" There with chaunted orison,
" And the long blaze of tapers clear,
" The stoled fathers met the bier;
" Through the dim aisles, in order dread
" Of martial woe, the chief they led,
" And deep entomb'd in holy ground
" Before the altar's solemn bound.
" Around no dusky banners wave,
" No mould'ring trophies mark the grave:
" Away the ruthless Dane has torn
" Each trace that time's slow touch had worn;
" And long o'er the neglected stone
" Oblivion's veil its shade has thrown:
" The faded tomb, with honour due,
" 'Tis thine, O Henry! to renew.
" Thither, when conquest has restor'd
" Yon recreant Isle,* and sheath'd the sword,

* Ireland.

" When Peace with palm has crown'd thy brows,
" Haste thee to pay thy Pilgrim vows.
" There, observant of my lore,
" The pavement's hallow'd depth explore;
" And thrice a fathom underneath
" Dive into the vaults of death;
" There shall thine eye, with wild amaze,
" On his gigantick stature gaze;
" There shalt thou find the monarch laid,
" All in warrior weeds array'd;
" Wearing in death his helmet-crown
" And weapons huge of old renown.
" Martial Prince! 'tis thine to save
" From dark oblivion ARTHUR's grave.
" So may thy ships securely stem
" The western firth; thy diadem
" Shine victorious in the van,
" Nor heed the slings of Ulster's clan:
" Thy Norman pike-men win their way
" Up the dun rocks of Harald's bay:
" And from " the steeps of rough Kildare
" Thy prancing hoofs the falcon scare;
" So may thy bow's unerring yew
" Its shafts in Roderick's heart imbrue."*

Henry " listened to the read" of the bard, and after his return from Ireland (whither he went to quell a rebellion raised by Roderick king of Connaught) journeyed to Glastonbury. There by his order the spot described in the legend was opened, and at the depth of seven feet a

* Warton's Grave of King Arthur, Poems p. 94.

plate with the following inscription appeared: HIC JACET SEPULTUS INCLITUS REX ARTURIUS IN INSULA AVALONIA. Pursuing their researches, the labourers dug down the distance of nine feet more, when the hollowed trunk of an oak tree was found, containing the gigantick bones of the British leader.†

This religious house, the demesnes of which produce at present above 250,000l. annually, fell into the hands of Henry VIII. at the time of the depopulation of the greater religious houses, but not without some tyrannical acts on the part of the king, which must add to the odium that deservedly rests upon his memory. Various devices, you well know, were adopted by this monarch, Cromwell his instrument, and the commissioners who visited the monasteries, to induce the ecclesiasticks to make a voluntary surrender of their possessions; and Richard Whiting, the last abbot of Glastonbury, had been assailed for that purpose by solicitations, promises, and threats. But the abbot was a sturdy independent character, and inflexibly refused to sign a deed that should bring want and penury upon the numerous in-

† Camden's Somerset.

mates of his convent. Were we indeed to allow, that an unwillingness to relinquish the dignity and consequence with which his situation invested him, operated as one cause of his refusal, we should only concede what might be pardoned to the frailty of human nature; since all that riches, rank, splendour, and influence could bestow, was accumulated upon the abbot of Glastonbury in a proportion enjoyed but by few subjects of his day. Five hundred monks were immediately subject to his control, and as many guests were daily feasted at his table. Knights and gentlemen performed various offices about his person; the sons of the nobility, placed under his protection, received instruction in his court; the whole country round subsisted upon the hospitality of his kitchen; and an hundred attendant horsemen always formed his cavalcade when he went abroad. It required, we must confess, a great effort of philosophy to give up all this. Whiting did not possess a sufficient fund for the sacrifice, and stubbornly refused to yield. Hitherto, only Henry's *avarice* had been inflamed, his *indignation* was now excited; and right and justice were quickly overturned by the mingled emotion.

Without any previous intimation, or shadow of of proof, and contrary to every dictate of humanity, the aged abbot was suddenly seized at his manor-house of Sharpham, under the pretence of a treasonable correspondence, and a robbery of his own convent; and after an hasty and indecent trial, hanged upon the high hill in the neighbourhood, called the Tor. You will forgive me, I am sure, for transcribing the following letter, which throws some light on this cruel and iniquitous transaction. It was written to Lord Cromwell.

" *Right Honourable and my very good Lorde,*

" PLEASETH youre Lordeshipp to be advertysed, that I have receyved youre Letters dated the 12th daye of this preasent; and understond by the same youre Lordeshipps greate Goodnes towardes my Friende the Abbott of *Peterborough*, for whome I have been ofte bold to wryte unto youre good Lordeshipp, moste hartely thankynge youre Lordeshipp for that and all other youre Goodnes that I have founde at your Lordeshipp's handes, even so desiering you my Lord, long to contynew in the same.

" My Lorde thies shalbe to asserteyne that on Thursdaye the 14th daye of this present

Moneth the Abbott of *Glastonburye* was arrayned, and the nexte daye putt to Execucyon with 2 other of his Monkes for the robbyng of Glastonburye Churche, on the *Torre* Hyll next unto the towne of Glastonburye; the seyd Abbott's body being devyded into fower partes and Hedde stryken off; wherof oone Quarter stondythe at Welles, another at Bathe, and Ylchester and Brigewater the rest; and his had uppon the Abby-Gate of Glastonbury.

" And as concernyng the Rape and Burghlary comytted, those parties are all condempned, and fower of theym put to Execucyon at the place of the Act don, which is called the *Were*, and there adjudged to hange styll in chaynes to th' ensample of others. As for *Capon*, oone of the seid offenders, I have reprived according to youre Lordeshipps letters, of whome I shall further shew unto you at my nexte repayre unto the Courte. And here I do sende youre Lordeshipp the names of th' enquest that passed on *Whytyng* the seyd Abbott, which, I ensure you my Lorde, is as worshippfull a a Jurye as was charged here thies many yeres. And there was never seene in thies parts so greate apparence as were here at thes present tyme, and never better wyllyng to serve the

King. My Lorde I ensure you there were many bylles putt up ageynst the Abbott by hys tenaunts and others for wronges and injuryes that he had donne theym. And I comytt youre goode Lordeshipp to the keaping of the blessed Tryntye. From *Welles* the 16th day of *Novembre* [1539]

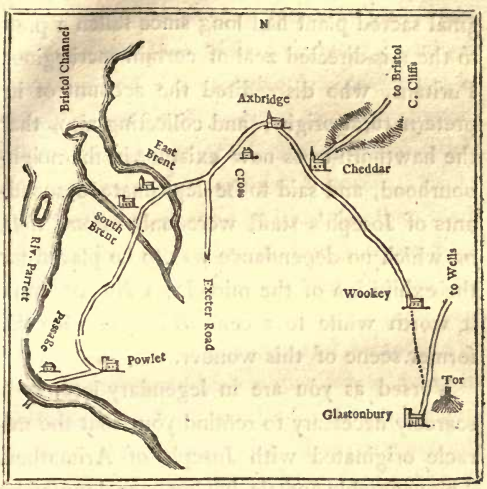
" Your owen to commande

" J. RUSSELL."

The inferences to be drawn from this curious epistle are sufficiently obvious; that Henry, like his prototype *Ahab* of old, beheld the possessions of Whiting with a covetous eye; that unable to acquire them by fair means he had determined to do so by iniquitous ones; that, for this purpose, *men of Belial* were suborned to accuse the abbot unjustly; that he fell a sacrifice to their perjured testimony; and that Henry seized on the lands belonging his monastery, by a title nearly as just as that which put the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite into the hands of the king of Israel.

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Passage-House, Sept. 4th.*

YOU will probably tax me with the want of curiosity, when I confess to you, that I left Glastonbury yesterday without visiting the spot which has been immortalized by the miraculous conversion of a dry walking-staff into a flourishing hawthorn-tree; but understanding from a sagacious cobbler, that the ori-

ginal sacred plant had long since fallen a prey to the mis-directed zeal of certain sacrilegious Puritans, who discredited the account of its preternatural origin; and collecting also, that the hawthorn-trees now existing in the neighbourhood, and said to be legitimate descendants of Joseph's staff, were only *bastard slips*, on which no dependance was to be placed for the exhibition of the miracle; I did not think it worth while to ascend *Weary-all* hill, the former scene of this wonder.

Versed as you are in legendary lore, it is scarcely necessary to remind you, that the miracle originated with Joseph of Arimathea. This venerable apostle, having been deputed by St. Peter to preach the gospel to the barbarous natives of Britain, left France with a few chosen companions to fulfil the arduous task. The party landed safely on the Southern shores of this country, and commenced their travels into the interior. Many days did they wander, without repose and without support, amongst the wilds of Belgick Britain, exposed to the inconveniences of an inclement climate, (for it was Christmas time) and the inhospitality of a barbarous people; till at length, exhausted, despairing, perishing, they reached a rising ground

in the neighbourhood of Glastonbury. Here the Saint, unable to proceed further, determined to repose, and in the agony of hopeless anguish, thrust his staff with violence into the ground; when lo! *mirabile dictu!* the withered stick instantly put forth vernal blossoms, thickened with foliage, and in less time than I am relating the story, shot up into a noble *hawthorn-tree*. Joseph hailed the happy omen, and assuming fresh strength and spirits from this evident mark of the favour and protection of Heaven, animated his companions to assist in building a place of worship in the neighbourhood of this hallowed spot. The party accordingly set seriously to the work, erected a church, and established themselves into a convent; whilst the neighbouring inhabitants, equally astonished by the visible interposition of Heaven, flocked to the place that had been thus sanctified by a miracle, and received, from the hands of Joseph and his monks, the rite of Christian Baptism.

The wonderful tree continued to thrive for ages, putting forth its blossoms on Christmas-day, and drawing numberless devotees to the spot, not from the neighbourhood alone, but from every corner of our own kingdom, and the

most distant parts of others. Glastonbury in the mean time battened upon this spirit of superstition, which had originally been excited by her monks, who, with that cunning for which the cloister has ever been famous, *added* other allurements to the miraculous tree, such as the heads, and arms, and noses, and rags of almost every saint in the calendar. The united powers of this *holy trumpery*, and Joseph's wonder-working plant, brought such a crop of pilgrims to the town of Glastonbury, that the houses of publick reception were insufficient to accommodate them; and as early as the fourteenth century, the abbots found it their interest to build an *Hospitium* for their exclusive use—the identical George Inn which I have before described. Though the hawthorn, at the time of the Reformation, lost much of the veneration hitherto attached to it, it notwithstanding continued to attract some attention till the latter end of the sixteenth century, when a rigid Calvinist having cut down one of its trunks (for it spread into two divisions) with impunity, the idea of its sacredness was completely done away with all the better-informed classes. The next century completed its destruction, when a stern Olive-

rian hewed away its solitary limb, and committed this once-powerful engine of superstition to the flames. Since this period, though the vulgar still regard its descendants in the neighbourhood with veneration, on account of the unusual period at which they bud, about Christmas, yet the progress of botanical knowledge has, with the more enlightened, dissolved the wonder by discovering that the individuals of one whole species of the thorn possess the same peculiarity.

My route for the day conducted me two miles and a half back on the Wells road, when taking a path across the fields, I strolled on towards the village of Wookey over the large level called Crankhill-moor. From the appearance of the country many miles to the westward and southward of Glastonbury, there can be no doubt of the tradition being founded in fact, that the sea in distant ages flowed up considerably to the east of that town. One extensive uniform flat presents itself, varied here and there with insular protuberances, swelling out into bold hills, for the most part of a conoidal form. On this tract, in many places, various marine substances have been found, confirming the tradition of the dominion which Old

Ocean is said formerly to have maintained over it. Indeed, till within these few years past, he continued to exercise his claim here; and, during high tides, frequently flooded this ancient territory of his waves. And even now, though by well-constructed drains the lands are converted from a marsh to meadow grounds, a marine inundation would certainly take place, were the embankments at Huntspill, raised to check the ocean tide, by any accident to be destroyed. A farmer at work in his fields was highly apprehensive of this event, having heard the dykes had been damaged by the late rains, and assured me, that were they to give way, the country must be inundated, as the ground on which we stood, lay considerably below high-water mark. Along the margin of the drains by which I proceeded towards Wookey, the rich perfume of the *Calamus Aromaticus*, or sweet-scented flag, occasionally 'stole upon the air,' and filled it with fragrance, tempting me almost to adopt the wish suggested to Fabullus,

> "Quod tu cum olfacies, deos rogabis
> "*Totum* ut te faciant, Fabulle, *nasum*."

The *myrica* or sweet-gale, also, with its serrated leaves and dry berry, the ancient substitute for hops, presented itself in almost every part of

the uncultivated moor. A most agreeable character of landscape marks the country, through the whole distance between this moor and the village of Wookey; beautiful and well-wooded knolls swell out on all sides; the flat grounds are rich and verdant; the magnificent cathedral of Wells, with its fret-work towers and elegant chapter-house, disclose themselves at intervals; and the lofty tor of Glastonbury towers above every thing to the eastward.

Wookey itself, indeed, boasts a situation highly picturesque. To the north and east, the dark and steep sides of Mendip hills form a striking contrast to the rich and diversified lands which spread themselves in other directions; a stream of chrystalline clearness murmurs through the village, and several modest cottages and elegant modern mansions ornament its immediate vicinity.

Mendip hills continued to accompany the road quite to Cheddar, approaching to and receding from it on the right hand, according to the whimsical undulating mould in which Nature has cast these enormous protuberances; whilst the vast levels of Godney-Moor, Wed-Moor, and Mark-Moor, stretched themselves quite to the sea-shore on the other side. My

object in this retrograde march was to include a very curious feature of Somersetshire in my tour, the Cliffs, or (as they are called in the country) the *Clieves* of Cheddar; nor did I repent of the circuitous route which this deviation from the direct line occasioned. Here indeed Nature, working with a gigantick hand, has displayed a scene of no common grandeur. In one of those moments, when she convulses the world with the throws of an earthquake, she has burst asunder the rocky ribs of Mendip, and torn a chasm across its diameter of more than a mile in length. The vast abruption yawns from the summit down to the roots of the mountain, laying open to the sun a sublime and tremendous scene—precipices, rocks, and caverns, of terrifying descent, fantastick forms, and gloomy vacuity. The rugged walls of the fissure rise in many places perpendicularly to the height of 400 feet, and in others, fall into obliquities of more than double that elevation. Whilst pacing their awful involutions (thro' which now runs the turnpike-road to Bristol) it requires but little imagination to fancy oneself bewildered amid the ruins of some stupendous castle, the gigantick work of distant times, when a whole nation lent its

hand to the enormous labour, and the operation was effected by the united strength of congregated multitudes. The idea of ruined battlements and solitary towers is perpetually suggested by lofty crags and grotesque masses of rock, which stand detached from their parent hills, and lift their beetling heads over the distant road below. Though the character of this huge chine be in general that of terrifick grandeur and rugged sublimity, it has notwithstanding some milder features; Nature, in her passion for variety, having introduced a few touches of the picturesque, by occasionally throwing over the bare face of the rock a mantle of ivy, and sprinkling here and there, amongst the crags and hollows, the yew, the ash, and other mountainous trees. Nor has she provided entertainment for the *artist* alone; the botanist and mineralogist will have reason to applaud her bounty, whilst he creeps along the crags of Cheddar cliffs, or treads the mazes of their caverns. *Here* the *Dianthus glaucus* discovers its rare and crimsoned head, accompanied by *Thalectra*, *Polypodia*, *Asplenia*, and many other plants equally curious and uncommon; and *there* are found *Lac Lunæ*, coralloids, stalactites, spars, and chrystallizations.

On approaching Cheddar cliffs, I could not but notice the very pleasing effect produced by a singular contrast—

"Vestibulum ante ipsum,"

at the entrance, all is gentle and beautiful. A brook, clear as glass, rushing from the roots of the rocks, leads its murmuring course by the side of the road on the left hand, backed by a shrubby wood, at the edge of which rises an humble cottage, the calm retreat of health and peace, and on the opposite side the ground swells into a steep, sufficiently covered, however, with verdure and vegetation to form a soft feature in the scene; but a step farther,

"Primisque in faucibus orci,"

a sudden alteration takes place, the rocks shoot up in all their grandeur, their black summits, scarred with the tempests of heaven, nodding ruin on the head of the gazing spectator. Having surveyed this extraordinary fissure from one extremity to another, I determined to penetrate into the *interior* of Mendip, and visit some of the caverns which open in different parts up the side of the steep. A guide offered herself in the person of an old woman, the inhabitant of the cottage at the mouth of the

cliffs. It was already dusk, but as my conductress sagaciously observed, we could see the caverns in the night as well as in the day, (they being at all times clad in impenetrable darkness) I did not hesitate following her up a precipitous ascent, at a short distance from her house, to the height of 100 feet. The way being steep, slippery, and gloomy, I could not avoid, as I ascended it, hinting occasionally some little apprehension; but was encouraged to proceed, not only by the example of my guide, but by her relations of the hardihood of other travellers, who had trodden the same formidable path. Amongst other anecdotes, she dwelt with particular pleasure on the equestrian feat of a *grand officer*, who in her presence, some years ago, ascended to the cavern on horseback by this narrow rugged track, to the great horror and astonishment of several ladies who were of his party. "He was a main fine man," she continued, "and would (as she had been told) have been made a *great general* years ago, but unfortunately was (the more the pity!) now and then apt to be a *little crazy*." The latter part of the speech allayed my wonder, and I was no longer astonished at the mad prank which this son of

Mars had played on Cheddar cliffs. With the assistance of some lighted candles, my guide and I proceeded nearly a quarter of a mile into the mountain through a winding cavern, presenting a succession of hollows of different heights and dimensions. Here a variety of curious natural productions are found on all sides, such as stalactitical nodules, consisting of several layers of incrustations folding over each other in distinct coats; the soft argillaceous earth, called *lac lunæ*; and some good pendant crystallizations. But my imagination was more interested by a remarkable echo in one of the chambers than by any thing else. The solemn stillness that reigned around gave additional effect to the reverberations of the voice, which came pealing upon the ear, thrown back, at different intervals, from the vaults and passages of the cavern. It was impossible to divest the mind of the idea that these gloomy recesses had their invisible inhabitants, and here I first perceived the accuracy and happy propriety of the Celtic prosopopœia for Echo, the *Son of the Rock*, which was certainly more appropriate to my situation, than the Hebrew *Beth-Col*, the daughter of the voice, or the *Imago Vocis* of the Latin poets.

The friendly *George* (you see I am partial to our patron saint) received me dirty and fatigued after my subterraneous journey, and offered every comfort that a well-supplied larder, and a good bed could bestow.

I had this morning prepared myself for an *antiquarian* treat, and was not a little chagrined at being disappointed. The case was this:—The friend to whom I am indebted for my route, had visited this country some years ago; at that time the large flat, called *Cheddar common*, was studded over with *barrows* or *tumuli*, in which the Saxon and the Briton reposed beside each other in the stillness of death—their animosities extinguished, their hopes and fears obliterated and forgotten. This scene, so mortifying to human ambition, I had pleased myself with the expectation of contemplating; but on reaching it, I found that I had, as is customary with me, reckoned without my host. The plough and harrow had been busy with the spot, and every appearance of these ancient places of savage sepulture had been totally defaced or obscured by inclosure and agriculture. I was secretly inveighing against the innovations of the husbandman on the sacred spot, when a labourer passing by, apprehending that I had some

doubts with respect to the road, civilly offered to give me information. This voluntary effusion of inborn good-nature introduced some conversation on my part, and led to an enquiry relative to the ancient and present state of Cheddar commons. " Ah, Sir," said my new acquaint-" ance, time was, when these commons enabled " the poor man to support his family, and bring " up his children. Here he could turn out his " cow and poney, feed his flock of geese, and " keep his pig. But the *inclosures* have de-" prived him of these advantages. The la-" bourer now has only his 14d. per day to " depend upon, and that, Sir, (GOD knows) " is little enough to keep himself, his wife, " and, perhaps, five or six children, when " bread is 3d. per pound, and wheat 13s. per " bushel. The consequence is, the parish " must now assist him. Poor-rates increase to " a terrible height. The farmer grumbles, and " grows hard-hearted. The labourer, knowing " that others *must maintain* his family, if he do " not do it himself, becomes careless, or idle, " or a spendthrift, whilst the wife and chil-" dren are obliged to struggle with want, or to " apply to a surly overseer for a scanty allow-" ance. This is the case with Cheddar, now,

" Sir, which (added he, with particular empha-
" sis) is *ruined for everlasting.*"

The observations of the honest fellow seemed to be founded on such strong facts, that my prior opinion on this subject was, I confess, somewhat shaken. That much *general* good arises from the inclosing system is not to be doubted: the sum of productive labour is increased, vast tracts of land are brought into cultivation, and additional crops of grain produced; but these advantages are purchased by so large a proportion of *individual* evil, that it becomes a question of morals as well as policy, a question as difficult as it is important, whether that system ought to be generally adopted. Perhaps, were we to take the trouble of enquiring into the effects produced by it, where it has been followed, we should find them to be nearly similar to those above-mentioned; whilst the same observation would also evince, that the price of grain had not abated in proportion to the additional quantities produced by it, nor the wages of the labourer been raised in proportion to the loss of those advantages of which he had been deprived by it. Perhaps, also, (I only speak *hypothetically*) we should discover that the chief advantage resulting from it had at-

tached to the neighbouring *landlord*, the value of whose estate was increased; the *farmer*, the profits of whose husbandry were enlarged; and the *rector*, the *quantum* of whose *composition* was swoln by the system; whilst the *labouring peasantry*, the nerves and muscles of the country, deprived of those advantages which enabled them to participate some of the *humbler* comforts of life, and kept alive that energy and industry which arise from a *consciousness* of *independence*, of whatever degree it may be, sunk into listlessness, or quitted in despair their useful labours for the carelessness of a military life; melting gradually away, and leaving us to experience and regret the truth of the poet's prophetical apostrophe,

" Ill fares that land, to hast'ning ill a prey,
" Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
" Princes and Lords may flourish, or may fade;
" A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
" But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
" When once destroy'd, can never be supply'd."

The town of Axbridge lay before me, straggling and irregular, but pleasantly situated at the south-western roots of the dark Mendip hills. Its church, a very handsome and uniform building, is the only object worth attention in the the place. This seems to have been much in-

debted to the *Prowse* family for its beauty and ornaments, many branches of which lie buried here, with expensive monuments to their memory. The organ is the gift of one of these benefactors, and a very splendid and curious altar-cloth is shewn, the elaborate work of Mrs. Abigail Prowse, who, with a perseverance and notableness equally unknown amongst the fair ones of modern days, employed herself seven long years in compleating the arduous task.

Leaving Axbridge, a short mile brought me to Cross, through which runs the turnpike-road from Exeter to Bristol. This publick way it was necessary for me to pursue for nearly six miles, almost every step affording an opportunity for the exercise of philosophy, and the triumphs of temper. You know what *walking in Wales* is, what its pleasures, and what its inconveniences are; and will, I believe, allow, that the former out-weigh and out-number the latter considerably. But in *England* it is a very different thing. The pedestrian *here* has to encounter many little slights and many petty affronts, much inattention and much impertinence; so that if he have not thrown into the bundle of requisites for his journey, an *ounce* of *coolness* and a *packet* of good-humour,

the odds are, that he pursues his ramble in irritability and peevishness, and returns home in disgust and disappointment. He must have courage enough to meet with indifference, what an excellent observer of human life emphatically calls, " the scornful reproof of the wealthy, and the despitefulness of the proud;" the grin, the sneer, and the laugh of the coxcomb or the blockhead, whom Fortune, in her blindness, has perched up in a phaeton, or mounted upon a gelding. Such a fiery ordeal as this I was obliged to undergo for two hours, and then turned, right joyfully, towards East-Brent, a pleasing little village, with its spire-crowned church, planted at the north-eastern extremity of *Brent-Knoll*, one of those conoidal hills which rise suddenly out of the flats of Somersetshire. A Roman entrenchment, on the summit of this eminence, was an irresistible inducement to climb its steep sides; though distinct from this curious remain of ancient castrametation, the prospect from this lofty station amply recompensed the trouble of reaching it.

The mountainous heights of Devon, speedily to be explored, rose before me; Wed-Moor, Mark-Moor, and Godney-Moor, the *Netherlands* of West-England, were spread to the left,

terminated by the pointed hill and lofty Tor of Glastonbury; and on the other side, my eye, after sweeping a wide expanse of water, the Bristol Channel, reposed itself on the *Hills of Glamorganshire*. A rapid association recalled to my mind the pleasures of the preceding year; and *joys* that are flown for ever, and *hopes* which then blossomed, but are now extinguished, naturally suggested the tender address of the Poet:—

" Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade!
" Ah fields belov'd in vain! ——
" I feel the gales that from ye blow,
" A momentary bliss bestow,
" As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
" My weary soul they seem to soothe;
" And, redolent of joy and youth,
" To breathe a second spring."

My eye long lingered on the well-known spot; and I reluctantly descended from the hill, relinquishing, not without pain, that mingled sensation of sorrow and gratification, arising from the distant view of a place, which has been the scene of former happiness. I know not whether you have ever felt the emotion; at all events, I refer you to your favourite bard Ossian, who had experienced, and describes it

with considerable felicity. "Pleasant is the "joy of grief! it is like the shower of spring, "when it softens the branch of the oak, and "the young leaf rears its green head! It is "pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on "the hunter's ear, when he awakens from "dreams of joy, and has heard the musick of "the spirits of the hill."

Brent-Knoll affords protection to another small village immediately opposite to East-Brent, and called from its situation South-Brent, as it lies immediately under the southern steeps of this hill. Thither I directed my steps, to the quiet retreat of S——, who had promised to relieve the gloom of solitude for a short distance, and be my companion during two days. The only curiosity of South-Brent is its little church, which has many vestiges of antiquity both within and without. Its *seating* is particularly curious, being certainly anterior to the Reformation. Instead of *pews*, it has (like the Russian churches) a regular series of plain oaken benches, with a back to each, running from either side towards the middle of the church, at right angles with the wall. The flat boards which form the terminations of these seats, are curiously and variously carved with

subjects most grotesque and ludicrous; such as a fox or an ass in a mitre; a pig roasting, and a monkey acting the part of turnspit; a party of geese hanging a pig; a monkey at prayers; a pig preaching, &c. These caricature carvings I should consider as instances of practical satire by the parochial clergy against the mendicant orders; for it is well known that the most inveterate antipathy subsisted between the parish-priests and the friars, in consequence of that considerable influence which the latter had obtained by their absurd vows and itinerant preaching. Doubtless, at the period when these sculptural representations were made, their meaning and allusions were well understood, and being always before the eyes of the congregations, they kept alive, by the powerful means of *ridicule*, that contempt for the Dominicans and Franciscans, which all the oratory of the parochial clergy would not probably have been able to excite; so true is the excellent observation of one well versed in history of the human heart—

" *Ridiculum acri*
" Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res."

The *font* also lays claim to a considerable antiquity, being deep and capacious, intended for

the *total immersion* of the infant to be baptized. This, you know, was the ancient mode of performing the ceremony; and only disused within these two centuries, when good sense getting the better of prejudice, the custom almost universally disappeared, to the great benefit of population; since the chances must have been very considerably against any infant which was thus, within the month, unmercifully plunged over head and ears into a bath of cold water. *Little accidents*, indeed, frequently occurred, whilst the practice continued, to the poor half-drowned children; one of which has been thought of sufficient importance to be incorporated into the page of metrical history. It relates to King Ethelred, the miserable ideot whose inglorious reign saw the Danish power established in this country. Archbishop Dunstan had the honour of baptising the royal babe; but the shock or the fright, occasioned by the immersion, produced in the infant the most unseemly and offensive effects. The prelate, whose olfactory nerves were probably somewhat distressed by the circumstance, returned the child to its nurse in a passion, exclaiming at the same time, "Per Deum et matrem ejus, "*ignavus homo* erit!—By GOD and his mother,

" this will be a most *scurvy scoundrel*;"* a prophecy which subsequent events compleatly accomplished.

After experiencing the hospitality of the *Parsonage*, I took the road (accompanied by S——) to our present quarters, the Shoulder of Mutton inn, in the village of Powlet. A flat country offers to the traveller little or nothing *picturesque*, since no *variety* can occur in one uniform level; no *intricacy*, in ground divided into regular quadrilatural inclosures, or moors intersected by rectilinear canals. Our walk, therefore, was not diversified with much change of scene. This part of Somersetshire, indeed, exhibits the province of Holland in miniature; a resemblance which is strengthened by the appearance of the women, who, like the Dutch females, have mostly very white teeth, and fair complexions.

With these general observations I intended to have closed my letter, but a character has just presented itself to our observation, which exhibits such a compleat specimen of independence in spirit, and energy in action, that I cannot resist giving you a slight sketch of it.

* W. Worcester. Lib. Nig. Scac. p. 530, ed. 1728.

It is, I must confess, a piece of *humble* biography, but it will not be the less interesting to you on that account. Materials for moral instruction are to be found as well in the cottage as in the palace; and although the peasant's life cannot, like the hero's, display those brilliant but pernicious exploits which dazzle and astonish mankind, yet it may, and often does, exhibit such examples of patient suffering and industrious exertion, as would have a *better* effect, if held up to publick observation, on the *moral character* of a nation, than all the pompously-written lives of the destructive conqueror, or the refined politician.

Whilst S—— and myself were chatting over our tea, we heard a horse and cart at the door of our caravansery; and immediately afterwards the sounds of a female voice, neither very gentle nor very melodious, calling to the ostler, roused our attention. On going to the door, we discovered a "thing of shreds and tatters," intended for a *cart*, and drawn by a small poney, not much larger than a stout Newfoundland dog. In the centre of this machine sat a female figure, brawny but short, who seemed to have weathered nearly sixty winters. She was recounting to a man who

stood by, the labours of her little mare, which had dragged her loaded car twelve miles to market in the morning, and brought it safely the same distance through the moor in the evening, when she herself could not discern the road. As there appeared to be no reserve on the part of the lady, S—— asked her some questions relative to her history, situation, and manner of life, to which she readily gave answers to the following effect:—

That she was a native of Huntspill, in the northern part of Somersetshire, where she had always resided, but being the fruit of an illicit commerce, had come into the world under rather unfortunate circumstances. Born in the poor-house there, she continued for some time the property of no particular person, but a sort of fixture or heir-loom, that descended from one master to another, without enquiry or regard. The education of a village workhouse, you know, is not very liberal or extensive, you will not be surprised, therefore, that Johanna Martin (for that is her name) left it for service at the age of twelve, with a mind as uncultivated as her body was scantily clothed—the former a perfect blank, the latter with a wardrobe consisting of one ragged gown. The term

of her servitude being expired, Johanna married a labourer, and settled in life. Unluckily (as she expressed herself) *she took terribly to breeding*, and in the course of seven years presented her husband with as many children. Two of them, however, died in their infancy; but while she was big with an eighth, it pleased Providence to take her husband from her. Shortly after his death she became once more a mother, and found herself a widow with six infants, and not a shilling in the world to feed them with. In this dilemma Johanna applied for relief to the officers of the parish, but "they relieved no out-paupers, though they had no objection to receive the children into the poor-house." Johanna had herself experienced the *comforts* of this mansion, and was not prejudiced enough in its favour to trust her offspring there; she therefore declined the offer, and determined to depend upon nothing but Providence and her own activity for the support of her numerous family. But no common exertion was sufficient for this. "For many a long month, gen-"tlemen," said she, "have I risen daily at "two o'clock in the morning, done what was "needful for the children, gone eight and ten "miles on foot to a market with a large basket

" of pottery-ware on my head, sold it, and re-
" turned again with the profits before noon."
By this more than horse-like labour, Johanna, in the course of a twelvemonth, amassed the sum of one guinea and a half; when, being under the necessity of quitting her cottage, she resolved to build an house for herself. But though a *famous architect*, and a very good *workman*, the undertaking was too great for her individual labour; she therefore hired a man of the place to assist in the building, and to work they went.

You will hardly suppose that Johanna's riches were so great as to form an object of plunder; but nothing is beneath the notice of petty villainy; the one pound eleven shillings and sixpence were yet untouched, being reserved to defray the expences of building. Her treacherous coadjutor had marked the spot in which the treasure, carefully wrapped up in a rag, had been deposited; and one fatal morning, when the unsuspecting Johanna was gone to a distant market, the villain seized the little deposit, and decamped, taking with him at the same time a few planks which had been provided for the intended building.

Can you conceive a disappointment more severe than that which the poor widow must have experienced on returning to her plundered dwelling? Or picture to yourself a situation more likely to have produced the gloom and listlessness of despair? But our heroine's mind was above the reach of fortune, and superior to the attacks of casualty. "To be "sure," said she, "I did curse the rascal that "robbed me, a little; but knowing that fretting "would not bring the money back again, I "wouldn't waste tears about the matter. Be-"sides, I had not leisure to grieve; the children "wanted bread, and I was the only person to "provide for them. I determined, therefore, "to work harder than ever for some time, and "to let the cottage alone, till I had gotten a "little before-hand, and then to finish it *myself*, "that I might not be robbed a second time. "To be sure, the children and I were obliged "to sleep for several weeks in the shell of the "tenement, with no other covering (for it was "not roofed) than a dew-board;* but 'twas "summer-time, and for the matter of that,

* A few temporary planks thrown across the cottage, from wall to wall, to defend them from the *dews of night*.

" we were warm enough, for *all six slept in* " *one bed.*

" Well, gentlemen," continued she, " with " the assistance of a good GOD, I was able at " last to finish my cottage, which (though I " say it myself) is a very tight little place; and " after some time, having saved another trifle, " I bought the old cart I am now in, and the " little poney you see, with which (though I " only gave half-a-guinea for her) I would not " part for the best fifty shillings that ever were " told. I wanted them bad enough, for what " with *smartish work*, and not very good living, " I began to find my legs give out; and that I " could not walk thirty miles a day now so well " as I walked them twenty years ago. With " these, however, I am able to carry pottery to " the different market-towns round about, and " drive a pretty briskish trade. To be sure I " be'nt very rich, but what I have is all of my " own getting. I never begged a halfpenny of " any soul; I brought up my children without " the help of the overseers; I can now live " without being obliged to them; I maintain " myself, and don't care a farthing for the *Pope* " or *Keeser* (Cæsar.)" Saying this, Dame Johanna Martin smacked her whip, and drove off,

leaving us in admiration of a character equally rare and exemplary—a mind unconquerable by disaster; a spirit which preferred contending with difficulties almost unparalleled, rather than to submit to the shackles of dependence.

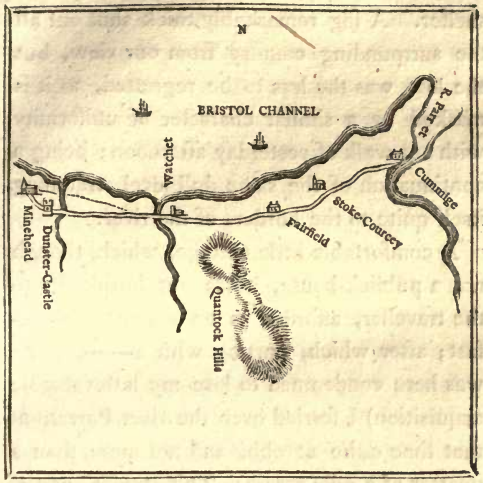
What might not have been expected from a character like this, had its advantages been greater, and its sphere of action more enlarged? Birth and education might have raised Johanna to an equality with the far-famed Semiramis of the ancient world, or the celebrated Catherine of modern times. She might have headed armies, and addressed senates; have scattered smiling plenty over distant nations, and given equal laws to an hemisphere. But on the other hand, powerful talents like hers might also have been perverted. She might have ruled the kingdoms with a rod of iron; have let loose the dogs of war o'er half the globe; have raised her glory on the destruction of her subjects; and cemented the fabrick of her power with blood and injustice. Providence therefore, in its wisdom, allotted to Johanna a "destiny obscure;" but bade her, even in this ignoble station, not be without her use; exemplifying in her little history the certain happy consequences of a pious trust in and dependence

upon the goodness of GOD, seconded by invincible perseverance, and the diligent exertion of those faculties which it has pleased our Creator to bestow upon us.

Adieu,

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Minehead, Sept. 6th.*

OBEDIENT to "the breezy call of incense-breathing morn," my companion and I were early to-day on our way to the passage-house on the banks of the Parret, about two miles and a half from the Shoulder of Mutton inn, which had last night given us

shelter. A fog remarkably thick shut out all the surrounding country from our view, but the loss was the less to be regretted, as it is marked by a similar character of uniformity with our walk of yesterday afternoon; being a continuation of the same dull level stretching itself quite to the borders of the river.

A comfortable little cottage, which, though not a publick-house, holds out hospitality to the traveller, afforded us an excellent breakfast; after which, parting with S——, (for I was here condemned to lose my late valuable acquisition) I ferried over the river Parret, at that time quite at ebb, and not more than a quarter of a mile across. This stream, one of the most considerable in Somersetshire, rises at a town (called, after itself, South-Parret) in Dorsetshire, lends a name to another place on the border of Somersetshire, passes South-Petherton, sweeps by Langport, gives trade and commercial animation to Bridgwater, and discharges itself into the Bristol Channel at the Start-Point. As I had been informed that it was remarkable for the impetuosity with which the tide enters its mouth, I waited about an hour and a half, till the commencement of the flood, in order to observe the phænomenon.

Its approach is announced by a distant roaring sound, which gradually increases upon the ear, until the cause itself appears; a volume of water, like one vast wave, sometimes rising to the height of four feet, (though when I saw it, not more than two) rushing on with irresistible violence, and covering instantaneously the steep banks, which had been left dry by the recess of the tide. It is called a *Boar*, in allusion, I presume, to the formidable sounds which this indomitable animal emits; and affords no bad idea of his violence and noise, when roused to fury by the spear of the hunter, or the attack of his dogs. A similar appearance, you know, occurs in many other rivers in different parts of the world; owing, evidently, to a huge volume of water, from particular circumstances of situation, being suddenly propelled into an estuary, where amplitude is not sufficient to afford room for the spreading of the waves. But in none is the Boar more remarkable than in the Ganges, where, with a rage adequate to the gigantick stream in which it exerts itself, it frequently overwhelms the ship and its navigators in one general ruin. In the Parret it acts upon a smaller scale, and with diminished violence; though it has

been known, when strengthened by a spring-tide, to have overturned large boats in its furious course.

I observed, with satisfaction, that the country now began to drop that tame formality which had so long characterized it: the shore became more bold, and the interior more irregular; the lofty hills of Quantock running from the heart of Somersetshire to lose themselves in the Bristol channel, crossed the country before me, and introduced a bold variety into the picture.

In a pleasing sequestered situation, on the eastern side of these eminences, lies the ancient village of Stoke-Courcy, called by a barbarous corruption Stogursy. The first of these names is a Saxon appellative, signifying a village; but the *agnomen* was imposed by the noble Norman family of De Courcy, which in Stephen's reign became possessed of this place, and made it the head of their barony.

That this distinction conferred some consideration on Stoke-Courcy in the feudal times, there is no doubt; it being denominated in ancient records *Burgum*; and having once, in the reign of Edward III. returned members to the national senate: but its importance is now

extinguished—one long straggling street, with some intersecting lanes, mark the outline of its ancient population; and an old cross evinces that it formerly possessed, what it has long since lost, a regular market. From what multiplied sources, my friend, is instruction offered to us, if we will not proudly contemn it! Every object in nature affords to the thinking mind some *moral hint*;

> " On every thorn delightful wisdom grows,
> " In every rill a sweet instruction flows;"

and all the works of art, whether flourishing, or sinking into ruin, appeal to the thoughtfulness of the soul, and rouse the slumbering powers of reflection. The revolutions and decay even of the little town now before us give energy to the moral principle, by teaching to pride a lesson of humility; by whispering to human conceit, that all the glory of man and his works " is but vanity and a lie."

A short mile brought me to Fairfield, the mansion of John Acland, esq; a large but tasteless building, the produce of the sixteenth century, when architecture was sunk to its lowest ebb; when the designs of the builder were neither classical nor Gothick, but an

injudicious compound of both these discordant stiles. Sir Thomas Palmer began the edifice upon the scite of a much more ancient castellated dwelling, about the year 1580, and his grandson completed it about twenty years afterwards; since which period nothing has been done to it, save such little alterations as modern convenience may have suggested. The manor, of which this is the mansion-house, originally belonged to the *De Vernai* family. When they had lived their little day, the Palmers of Sussex succeeded to the property, and from them it passed into the possession of a branch of the Aclands of Devonshire, in the year 1672.—Some coats of arms, notices of its first lords, the De Vernais, are preserved in the old windows of the mansion.

Beauty of situation does not appear to have been an object of regard with our forefathers; who rather courted the sullen gloom of sequestered hollows, than the cheerful variety of diversified prospects which the commanding eminence, or sloping declivity, affords. In compliance with this false taste, Fairfield is built on a spot comparatively low and flat; though at a small distance to the westward of it, some rising grounds offered a situation,

which, overlooking the Channel, the coast of Wales, and a long stretch of the English shore, would have given it a view equal to most in the kingdom. Some good woods rise around the mansion; amongst which are trees of a considerable magnitude: but the lime is the prominent one, and from the vigour with which it flourishes, seems most congenial to the soil.

Quantockshead, a village, (as the name imports) planted nearly at the point where the Quantock hills terminate in a high land, rising over the Channel, lies snugly under these swelling eminences, sheltered from almost every wind that can blow. The country around it is extremely pleasing; and in one of its most beautiful spots, about a mile and a half on the road to Minehead, the elegant residence of Mr. Balch, called St. Audries, is happily placed. A broad verdant vale spreads itself before the house, which is nearly encircled by a noble belt of hills, rising like an amphitheatre around it, and judiciously spotted with woods of oak, and plantations of fir. When the *bottom* offers such scenery as this to the architect, there can be no reason why he should refuse the situation. Nature has given him almost all she can—richness, variety, and magnificence; and he

must be fastidious indeed, if with these he be not content.

The village of St. Decuman's is remarkable for nothing, except its being a monument of Popish ignorance and superstition. In the long and venerable list of Saints which forms the Roman-Catholick calendar, the grey-beard from whom this village was named, and who flourished in that fruitful age of miracles, the seventh century, makes a conspicuous figure. Floating over the Bristol Channel on a bundle of sticks, from Wales his native country, St. Decuman took a fancy to the lofty spot on which the present church was afterwards erected; and here, in a little hut, he practised all the austerities of a solitary monastick life.—A faithful cow, who accompanied him in his voyage from Cambria, and followed his steps wherever they were directed, supplied his wants by the copious streams of an inexhaustible udder. In this seclusion he continued for some time, till at length, having offended, accidentally, one of the heathen inhabitants of those parts, the ferocious savage with one blow of his sabre separated the head of the saint from his shoulders. But the murderer might as well have divided a polypus; the decapitated body

had not lost the use of its arms, but catching up the head in a moment, ran to a spring, in which St. Decuman had been accustomed to bathe, and rincing it well from blood and dust, placed it upon its own neck, whence it had been so rudely dissevered. The saint was himself again, and lived for many years to relate, with his own mouth, the wondrous miracle to his numerous devotees.

My road ran immediately through Watchet, otherwise I would have avoided a miserable stinking place, which, like a withered beauty, has only now to boast that it *once was* handsome.

Commodiously situated on the shore of the Bristol Channel, Watchet formerly enjoyed an extensive trade and a large herring-fishery; but the former (for you know she is a capricious lady) has flown to other ports, and the fish (equally whimsical) have left the shore. Its population is in consequence decreased, and its riches are melted away. A few small ships are indeed still employed in freighting kelp and lime-stone; but they do injustice to its pier which is large and convenient, and capable of sheltering a great number of vessels. This was first constructed in the reign of Elizabeth, but has been added to at different times, and

is at present supported by a duty payed on the importation of all goods at its wharfs. The coast in the neighbourhood affords excellent lime-stone, which burns into a lime of the most tenacious and adamantine texture. The cement made use of in constructing the Eddystone Light-house, that wonder of modern masonry, was composed of the Watchet lime-stone; and its resisting hardness has been hitherto found unconquerable by the fury of the elements, the convulsions of the tempest, and the madness of the ocean.

A noble view of the Bristol Channel had accompanied me for the last ten miles, but after half an hour's walk from Watchet, I descended quite to the shore, and found myself on a level with a vast sheet of water, serene as the unruffled lake; the huge promontory of Minehead, in deep shadow to the left hand, and the beautiful belt of Cambrian hills bounding the tranquil flood, gorgeously lighted up by the descending sun, in the distance. A neat little inn, called the "Blue-Anchor," threw open its door at this spot, and invited me, "nothing loth," to refresh myself. On enquiry, I found that others had been equally pleased with the place as myself; which had

induced the people of the inn, or their connections, to build a small house for lodgers, and fit up a bathing-machine for their use.

The recess of the tide allowed me to keep the sands from hence to Minehead, a distance of six miles; the Channel spreading to the right, and an undulating line of hills rising to the left. On the brow of one of these eminences, the proud turrets of Dunster-Castle, the seat of John Fownes Luttrell, esq; shoot up from a venerable wood, and produce a beautiful variety in the majestick gloom of the deep mass of shade which surrounds them. From the point where it first became an object in the picture, the castle appeared to stand on the side of a hill, with a large proportion of its wooded declivity rising behind the building. I soon found, however, that this was but a *deceptio visus*; for on approaching the place, the higher ground receded from its neighbour, and I perceived that the castle had chosen a spot worthy of its dignity, the broad summit of an isolated hill. The *sheltered* situation, indeed, which, from afar, it *appeared* to have assumed, though every way congenial to modern ideas of comfort as well as beauty, would have been but ill-calculated for the unsettled

period of the Saxon heptarchy, when it was originally constructed; or for the rude times of feudal insolence, when its walls were to ensure impunity to rapine and violence. The Baron of old, knowing that he was surrounded with robbers like himself, would not, unwarily, plant his retreat in a spot commanded by adjoining eminences: the bold brow of the precipitous cliff, or the lofty summit of the solitary hill, could alone afford him security in that state of desultory warfare, in which his own inordinances, sanctioned by the practices of the feudal ages, perpetually kept him; and these were the fastnesses which he pitched upon for his residence. Dunster-Castle, in conformity to this principle, is situated on a spot favourable to resistance—a steep eminence at the southern extremity of the town, overlooking a great extent of country, and commanding an uninterrupted view of the Bristol Channel and the coast of Wales.

Walks, judiciously planned, permeate its venerable woods; and the slope, which unites its steep with the flat moor below, is tastily managed and appropriately ornamented.

Dropping down from this noble mansion again to the shore, I pursued my walk over a

long and narrow rabbit-warren, but as thickly inhabited as a Chinese province, belonging to Mr. Dunster, and reached Minehead just as "the curfew tolled the knell of parting day." As the chick, however, intended for my repast, was to be caught, killed, picked, and roasted, I had sufficient time allowed me to ramble over the town, as well as to acquaint you with the result of my observations.

The survey of this place, indeed, includes a walk of some labour, since it consists of three parts, divided from each other by fatiguing heights. The Bottom, or *Quay-Town*, by far the most considerable of the three, stretches along the shore under the menacing head of that vast promontory, called Minehead-Point, a rugged steep, rising to the height of eight hundred feet, and beetling over the houses which crouch at its roots. Its chief boast is a convenient harbour, accommodated with an excellent quay and pier, the animated scene, formerly, of a busy coasting and foreign trade, But like Watchet, Minehead can now only refer to its *quondam* importance; for though the pride of *extinguished greatness* be sufficiently visible here, yet the extensive commerce and proportionate affluence, which, in times of yore,

inspired this inflation, and gave it some sort of consistency, have long since become the "mere shadows of a shade."

The *Middle* Town, in which my comfortable caravansery stands, the Plume of Feathers, kept by the worthy Mr. Mansfield, runs along the declivity of an hill, somewhat more than a quarter of a mile from the *Quay-Town*, and has the conveniences of a post-office, shops, and lodging-houses. The *Upper-Town* drops down the eastern slope of a lofty eminence, called *Greenaleigh*, and has nothing to recommend its shabby irregular lanes, but the extensive prospect necessarily given to it by its elevation.

But though Minehead have long since deplored the loss of its extensive trade, some appearance of cheerfulness and animation has been given it, till within these few years, by the company which resorted thither in the summer season for the purpose of bathing. What should have occasioned the desertion of those who sought health or pleasure on its shores, is not easily to be accounted for; since it seems to unite all the advantages, without the usual concomitant inconveniences of a bathing-place. The shore is hard and fine; the machines commodious; the lodgings reasonable; provisions cheap

and plenty; and though its access be rendered easy by an excellent turnpike-road, which runs to Bristol, yet its distance from the metropolis, and the populous parts of England, is sufficiently great to prevent those *felicity hunters*, the teazing insects of fashion, from disturbing with their impertinent buzzings the pensive or rational pleasures of them who choose to enjoy Nature at Minehead, during the summer season. To these inducements may be added the salubrity of its climate, which, like that of Cythera, is so soft and serene, that the myrtle-tree will live in the neighbourhood of this place, uninjured through all the roughness of an English winter. The admirer of Nature also may indulge his pursuits here in various ways; the beautiful hills and precipitous cliffs offer to the botanist a variety of rare and curious plants; the shore spreads before the chonchologist, a rich profusion of *buccina*, *trochi*, *nerites*, *tellini*, and other shells; and the geologist will find sufficient phænomena to employ all his sagacity, and exercise his whole talent for hypothesis. Amongst them is the following curious appearance:—about a mile from the Lower-Town, on the beach leading to Dunster, at the recess of the tide a spot is

denuded, in which are discovered many roots of prodigiously large trees, peeping out of the sand, to the height of half a foot or more. Externally, these masses are black and unintelligible; but when crumbled between the fingers, (for they are soft and friable) the genuine colour and original texture of the wood are plainly seen. The wonder, however, remains to be told, that when the fragments are broken parallel to the grain of the wood, imbedded in the very heart are found shells, foreign to the coast of Somersetshire, in a semi-fossil state, and oak-leaves, either perfect or decayed.

A species of *patellæ*, too, is very common on the rocks of Minehead, a good substitute for the famous *murex* of antiquity, that produced the invaluable Tyrian dye, with which the ancients stained their wool,

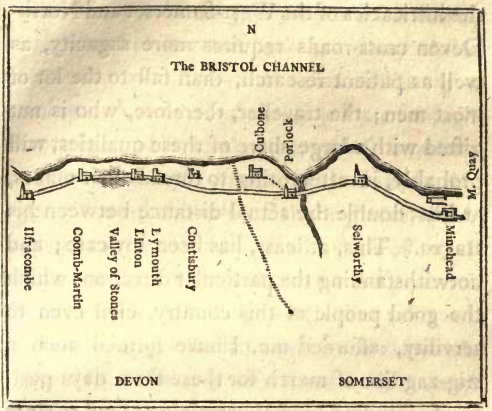
"Tyrio ardebat murice lana."

A small vein running over the head of the fish contains this precious liquor, with which if linen be stained, and the characters exposed to different degrees of the *light* of the *sun*, they will change their hue, and become successively (from a dull white) pea-green, deep green,

blue, and purple; the linen being then washed in scalding water, the marks upon it will blaze out into a splendid crimson colour, which no future washings can obliterate.

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Ilfracombe, Sept. 9th.*

THE above date will evince that my progress this year is much more deliberate than our motions of the last autumn were. You are not, however, to attribute this to indolence; for though I have already discovered that solitude has a powerful tendency to deaden energy, and extinguish exertion, yet another cause has contributed to produce this diminution of the accustomed labours of the day. To unravel

the intricacies of the West-Somerset and North-Devon cross-roads requires more sagacity, as well as patient research, than fall to the lot of most men; the traveller, therefore, who is not gifted with a large share of these qualities, will probably, in attempting to thread their mazes, at least double the actual distance between his stages. This, at least, has been my case; and notwithstanding the particular directions which the good people of this country, civil even to servility, afforded me, I have formed such a zig-zag line of march for these three days past, as, if measured, would certainly extend to sixty miles instead of forty, the real distance.

I will not deny, however, that I have been amply repaid for all these deviations from the right road, since many scenes of grandeur and beauty have discovered themselves to me in consequence, which I should otherwise have lost. The country, more varied and majestick every step, has regaled me with hills lofty and bold, vales deep and rich; whilst the coast has been equally entertaining in another way, disclosing, ever and anon, a tremendous scene of dark romantick rocks, fretted below into caverns by an unruly ocean, and their proud heads torn and scarred by the tempests of heaven.

Early in the morning of the 7th I left Minehead, intending to reach Linton, a village about twenty-five miles from that town, on the same evening. A deep shady road led me through Selworthy, and several other small hamlets, sequestered and picturesque in the highest degree. The inhabitants of these places, quiet in their manners, and ready in their offers of service, seemed to be formed for the peaceful retreats which they occupied. Far removed from the seats of *refinement*, as it is called, which is too frequently only an *elegant modification of vice*, the hinds pass their time, at least in honest simplicity; and having no artificial wants to supply, exhibit such an appearance of *contentment*, as gives them, in the eye of sober reason, a manifest advantage, when placed in comparison with the more refined classes of society, and confutes the argument of the poet, in spite of the magick language in which he has clothed his reasoning—

" Yet let them only share the praises due,
" If few their *wants*, their *pleasures* are but few;
" Since every *want* that stimulates the breast,
" Becomes a source of pleasure when *redrest*.
" Hence from such lands each pleasing science flies,
" That first excites desire, and then supplies;

" Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
" To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
" Unknown those powers which raise the soul to flame,
" Catch ev'ry nerve, and vibrate through the frame.
" Their level life is but a smould'ring fire,
" Nor quench'd by want, nor fann'd by strong desire.—
" And all the gentler morals, such as play
" Thro' life's more-cultur'd walks, and charm our way,
" These, far dispers'd, on tim'rous pinions fly,
" To sport and flutter in a kinder sky."

All this, 'tis true, is beautiful in poetry, and specious in theory; but when we reflect how few of the numerous *wants* which extreme civilization creates, are really *redressed*, and what pain is produced by the inability to gratify them; when we consider how much more frequently, in the commerce of superior life, the sensibilities of the heart, and finer feelings of the soul, are wounded than soothed; and lastly, that *happiness* is a relative term, implying the absence of pain rather than a positive possession of good, we shall, perhaps, be induced to allow, that the chance for that portion of felicity, which it has pleased Providence to make attainable by man, is greater " in the " cool sequestered vale of life," where the circle of wants is bounded by possession, and the pains of privation are never experienced,

than in the blazing path of refinement, illuminated by elegances, arts, and sciences, but obstructed by unaccomplished wishes, unattainable desires, and disappointed hopes.

A long descent introduced me into the little sea-port town of Porlock, situated about six miles to the westward of Minehead, shut out from the surrounding country by lofty hills, but open towards the sea, on which it safely looks, from the bottom of a recess or bay, about one league from one extremity to another. Of these points the eastern one rises with prodigious magnificence from the ocean, whose maddened waves have torn its front into misshapen crags, and scooped its sides into stupendous caverns; the western extremity is of a softer character, and slopes gradually to the shore, sheltering, from the prevalent south-westerly storms, the quay and a small pier, (one mile and a half from Porlock) where the little commerce of the place is transacted, and its fleet (consisting of two sloops, which trade to Bristol and Wales) is freighted and unladen. An odd effect is produced by the very unusual stile of architecture, in which the houses are, for the most part, built; for here, as in other small country places distant from the seat of

the arts, one model is generally followed in constructing the dwellings of their inhabitants. At Porlock they rise to the height of two stories, and are mostly thatched; but the *fashion* of that place has determined, that the *chimnies*, instead of preserving their usual retired situation, should be formed in the front of the houses, and their backs project into the street.

A shoemaker having offered to accompany me to some *remarkables* in the neighbourhood of Porlock, I accepted his services; and under the direction of this guide, whom I found, like all the sons of St. Crispin, to be by no means deficient in information, set out to visit the hamlet of Culbone, and a singular edifice of Lord King's in its vicinity.

The egress, from Porlock to the west, is by a most steep and fatiguing ascent, drawn out to the distance of at least two miles, and climbing to the summit of the lofty hills which overhang the town on this quarter. Here the swelling downs commence, which spread their huge waves, like a solid sea, quite through North-Devon, giving herbage to mutton, as delicious in flavour as the little mountaineers of Merioneth; and, what perhaps is to the *poor* of much greater consequence, affording an

abundant supply of incomparable heath for fuel, and thus depriving poverty of one of its bitterest accompaniments—the pain of cold. Deep ravines intersect these downy elevations in various directions; and in their sequestered hollows small villages, or rather little groupes of farm-houses, have their unenvied situation.

After continuing five or six miles on these hills, with a noble view of the sea and the coast of Wales, (which now began to fade away in distance) always before us, we turned our steps towards the coast, and descended a rapid steep to Culbone. On our way, about a mile from the hamlet, excessive thirst obliged me to enquire at an old stone cottage, about which I saw some cows, for a draught of milk. A squalid female figure, opening the door, informed me there was no such thing at the *parsonage*, but that a farm-house, about a quarter of a mile further, would supply me with a bowl of this beverage. The cordwainer, seeing me surprised at the term parsonage-house being applied to this wretched hovel, told me, with that sort of smile which *superior information* sometimes assumes, that this was the *rectorial mansion*, where the incumbent of Culbone formerly resided; adding, he had no doubt, miserable as

it now was, that when it had a *parson* for its tenant, there was no lack of all the good things which could be stowed away in it.

The approach to Culbone church is by a small foot-path, narrow, rugged, and so declivitous, that it was with the utmost difficulty I kept my footing, though aided by a stout staff, with a pike at its extremity. A gloomy mantle of wood covers this steep, and nearly excludes the fair light of day, so that, like Æneas and his friend Achates, in their descent to Tartarus, Crispin and I pursued for some time a *darkling journey*, of considerable toil, and some little hazard. After a descent of about six hundred feet the path terminated, and introduced to our view Culbone church and churchyard, situated in as extraordinary a spot, as man, in his whimsicality, ever fixed on for a place of worship.

A small cove, of an oval form, opened upon us, the bottom of which is formed by a little verdant carpet of two or three acres. Around this hollow, the hills on every side, save on that which is next to the sea, tower up in a direction nearly perpendicular, to the sublime height of twelve or thirteen hundred feet, fretted with jutting rocks, and laden with ve-

nerable woods. *Here* the oak's solemn shade is relieved by the bright berry of the mountain-ash; and *there* the light satin of the airy birch is chastised by the gloom of the melancholy yew; whilst the feathering fir and luxuriant beach lend their contrasting foliage to give a wider variety to the enchanting scene. At the mouth of the cove the land suddenly falls to the shore, in an abrupt descent of four or five hundred feet, rough with enormous crags of rock, but enlivened with verdure and foliage quite to the beach.

In the centre of the little recess, thus surrounded and defended from the intrusion of the stranger, stands the Lilliputian church of Culbone, a Gothick structure, thirty-three feet in length and twelve feet in breadth, with a cemetery of proportionate dimensions stretching round it, appropriately ornamented with broken modest grave-stones, and the remains of an ancient stone-cross. Two cottages, planted just without the consecrated ground, are its only companions in this secluded dell.

Sure never was a spot better calculated for the indulgence of the meditative faculty than Culbone church-yard. Every circumstance around leads the mind to thought, and soothes the bosom to tranquillity. The deep murmur

of the ocean tide rising from beneath, but softened in its lengthened course, falls gently on the ear, which lists with equal rapture to the broken mysterious whisper of the waving woods above.—Here, whilst all without is wasteful war and raging horror, the thoughtful wanderer, as he treads the glen, will please himself with the conviction, that he has at least found one little spot, sacred to PEACE. Here, whilst he feels the "holy calm" of silent solitude, he will drop a tear, in chastened sorrow, over human vice and human folly; over the wickedness of the *few*, whose destructive ambition converts a world, so competent (through the beneficence of Providence) to render men comfortable and happy, into one wide scene of waste and misery—and over the folly of the *many*, who allow themselves to be made the instruments of such devastation and wretchedness.—He will reflect, with sadness and astonishment, on the torrents of blood, that even now are flooding the Christian world; and in the pure spirit of generous patriotism, will breathe an aspiration to Heaven, in the beautifully figurative language of Solomon;—"Oh! that the winter were past; that the "rain were over and gone! that the fig-tree

" would put forth her green figs; and the " vines with the tender grape would give a " good smell! that the flowers would appear " on the earth; the time of the singing-birds " come; and *the voice of the turtle be heard once* " *more in our land.*"

" At nobis PAX alma, veni, spicamque teneto,
" Perfluat et pomis candidus ante sinus."

Difficult of access as Culbone church is, it has, notwithstanding, regular service performed in it by a gentleman from Porlock, who journeys thither on a small poney (for no carriage can approach it) by a narrow devious path of frightful declivity, which ſkirts in a zig-zag direction along the cliff that rises from the channel below. His congregations, indeed, are not very numerous, for the whole parish does not contain more than seven or eight houses, and about forty inhabitants. Of these, none reside near the church at present, owing, I presume, to the obvious inconvenience of the situation. Exclusive, indeed, of the difficulty in getting to and from Culbone church, those who choose to dwell near it must be content to give up a large proportion of their annual sunshine; for owing to the prodigious elevation of the surrounding hills, the cheering ra-

diance of the orb of day never descends to Culbone church-yard for nearly four months in the wintry season of the year.

Quiet and sequestered as this romantic spot at present is, it has heretofore borne an honourable name in the annals of rustic revelry; its rocks have echoed to the shouts of multitudinous mirth, and its woods rung with the symphonious music of all the neighbouring village bands;—in plain English, a revel or fair was wont to be held here in times of yore. I fortunately met with a garrulous old blacksmith, who had himself made a great figure on these festive occasions. He had been the *Entellus* of the place, and dwelt with great exultation on his many triumphs which the church-yard of Culbone had witnessed.—— "About forty-five years agone, Sir," said he, "I was at a noble revel in this spot; three "hundred people at least were collected to-"gether, and rare fun, to be sure, was going "forward. A little warmed with dancing, and "somewhat flustered with ale, (for certainly "Dame Matthews did sell stinging good stuff) "I determined to have a touch at skittles, and "and sport away a sixpence or shilling, which "I could do without much danger, as I had a

" golden half-guinea in my pocket. To play,
" therefore, I went; but the liquor getting into
" my head, I could not throw the bowl strait,
" and quickly lost the game, and two shillings
" and nine-pence to boot. Not liking to get
" rid of so much money in so foolish a manner,
" and not thinking the fault was in myself, (for
" too much ale, you know, Sir, is apt to make
" one over-wise) I resolved to win back the
" two and nine-pence, and then leave off; and
" accordingly set to play a second time. The
" same ill-luck followed me, and in an hour
" and half I had not only lost the remainder of
" my money, but about sixteen shillings more
" out of a guinea which I borrowed of a friend.
" This terrible stroke quite sobered me; my
" wife was but just brought to-bed, and I could
" not help thinking what a wicked scoundrel
" I must be, to go and run into ruin, and to
" deprive her and the child of food, merely to
" indulge myself in a game, which, instead of
" being an amusement, had put me into a ter-
" rible passion, and made me curse and swear
" more than ever I did in my life. Desperately
" vexed at my folly, I went into the wood hard
" by, and sat down by the side of the water-
" fall to reflect on my situation. I could

" plainly hear the singing and laughing of the
" revel, but it was now gall and wormwood to
" me; and I had almost resolved to escape from
" that, my own reproaches, and the distress of
" my wife, by throwing myself down the cliff
" upon the shore. Providence, however, was so
" good as to preserve me from this additional
" wickedness, and to put a thought into my
" head, which saved me from the consequences
" of despair. Cool and sober, for I had washed
" myself in the stream, and drank pretty largely
" of it, it struck me, that if I went back to the
" skittle-ground, and ventured the remaining
" five shillings, I should have a good chance of
" winning back my money from those who had
" beaten me before, as *I* was now *fresh*, and
" *they* all overcome with ale. Accordingly I
" returned to the church-yard, and took up the
" bowl, though pretty much jeered by the lads
" that had hitherto been winners. The case,
" however, was altered; I had now the advan-
" tage, could throw the bowl strait, took every
" time a good aim, and more than once knocked
" down *all nine*. To make short of my story,
" Sir, it was only night that put an end to my
" good-luck; and when I left off play, I found
" I had got back my own half-guinea, the

" guinea I had borrowed, and fifteen shillings
" in good silver, after paying my part of the
" charge for the day. You may suppose I was
" not a little happy at this change of fortune;
" in truth, Sir, I felt very grateful, and as soon
" as I had left my companions, fell down on
" my knees to thank GOD for saving me
" from ruin, and did not rise till I had made a
" solemn vow that I would never venture
" another sixpence in gambling again; a vow
" which I have for these five and forty years
" most religiously observed, and which I have
" found so much *pleasure* in keeping, that there
" is no chance I shall ever wish to break it."
I listened to the old gentleman's story, fraught with the wisdom of experience, with due attention; thinking, at the same time, that if the more *exalted gamblers* would imitate the wisdom and the virtue of this honest blacksmith, *high-life*, as it is called, would exhibit much fewer scenes of wretchedness and vice than it at present displays.

Our road to Lord King's cottage crept through the woods which cloath the steep cliffs to the eastward of Culbone, and presented, at every step, a variety of curious plants, the rare production of these romantic

regions; *silene amœna, veronica montana, polypodium aculeatum, polypodium dryopteris, bird's-nest orchis, yellow rein-deer moss,* &c. &c. &c. and an immense quantity of *whortle-berry* plants, full of their cool, refreshing, delicious fruit. With considerable difficulty we found his Lordship's building, placed, like an eagle's nest, in a cleft of the rock. The rough slope that forms the western extremity of Porlock-bay is the spot chosen for this very singular mansion. Half-way up this steep, a level platform has been made with great labour and proportionate expence, about a quarter of an acre, perhaps, in extent, and a small castellated dwelling of indifferent taste and little convenience erected upon it. The thick woods which cover the face of this abrupt descent, are here cleared away, and a beautiful view, by these means, introduced of Porlock-bay, town, and the Bristol channel. This, indeed, is the only charm which it possesses. The road to it is disagreeable, difficult, and hazardous; the precipice, rising four or five hundred feet behind it, threatens, the first severe frost, to overwhelm it with destruction; and the abrupt descent before and on each side of it, matted by impenetrable woods, confines the

inhabitant to a small area of about twenty yards square. Picking our way through these shaggy shades, Crispin and I descended to Porlock quay, which stretches close along the shore; and having refreshed ourselves with some good Somersetshire ale, strolled quietly to the town, after a most laborious walk of twelve miles.

A *village-church* on a Sunday I have always considered as a very impressive sight. I remained, therefore, at Porlock till the afternoon of yesterday, in order to partake in the social worship of the place. The simplicity of the service, the neat and cheerful appearance of the congregation, decked in their gayest attire to celebrate this "rest of the Lord," when poverty relaxes from his labour, and industry is still, the attention and seriousness of the worshippers, all combined to form a scene in the highest degree interesting. This pleasing effect was greatly assisted by the *manner* in which the Rev. Mr. —— performed the sacred offices of the day. No misplaced attempt at fine acting or fine speaking led the congregation to think that his thoughts were more employed about himself than the service of the church; but an energy and a solemnity marked his delivery, which, as they evinced that the speaker's own

heart was affected by the truths he uttered, did not fail to produce a similar impression upon the hearts of his hearers. Indeed, here was no inducement to resort to *stage-trick*, or oratorical affectation; since Mr. —— and his audience stood much in the same relation to each other as Hamlet with Horatio:

> " Nay, do not think I flatter;
> " For what *advancement* may I hope from thee,
> " That no *revenue* hast, but thy good spirits,
> " To feed and cloath thee?"

No *patronage* was to be obtained, no *interest* was to be acquired, for Mr. ——, like his great Master, *preached the Gospel to the poor*.

My afternoon's walk lay over the down which I had climbed the day before, with the ocean on one hand, and the same swelling hills and narrow vallies on the other. As I proceeded further to the west, these depressions became deeper and more picturesque, sprinkled with shrubby wood, scarred with crags of rock, and animated by little torrents which now leaped from ledge to ledge, in sportive playfulness; though probably, when swelled by the waters of a wintry deluge, they assume a far different character, and shake the vallies with their fury.

The small church of Contisbury, perched upon a hill in solitary exposure, on my right, indicated that I was about three miles from Lymouth, and here my guide of the preceding day had informed me I was to expect "a nation strange road." In truth, he had not excited my curiosity in vain, for perhaps this public way may be considered as one of the greatest wonders of North-Devonshire. Narrow, rugged, and uneven, it creeps along the face of a prodigious rocky down, that runs with a most rapid descent to the ocean, which is roaring below, at the depth of five or six hundred feet. Formidable as the precipice is, the neighbouring inhabitants have not so much as erected a low wall, or stretched a friendly rail along its brink, to lend their aid in case of accident or darkness; so that should the traveller's horse become restive whilst treading this perilous path, or he himself mistake the way, nothing could probably prevent his immediate destruction. But this road, so alarming to the stranger, is totally divested of any thing like horror to the Devonian. Custom, which reconciles all that is fearful or disagreeable, painful or terrible to the mind, enables him to travel it with perfect indifference; and

whilst I was descending the most abrupt part with the greatest caution, a Devonshire peasant, seated upon a laden horse, and driving three others before him, passed by me down the declivity at the rate of a dashing postillion upon a good turnpike-road.

Following this path to the bottom of the steep, I suddenly found myself in a village truly romantic; the little sea-port of Lymouth crouching at the feet of august rocky hills which beetle over it in every direction, except where the bottom in which it stands unites with the shore. Unlike the usual formal arrangement of habitations in towns and villages, the houses here are not thrown together into regular groupes, or streched out into rectilinear rows, but sprinkled over the little flat, as if dropped by the hand of chance, and concealed from each other by an abundance of shrubby trees, and high hedge-rows. Two Alpine brooks, flashing over their craggy beds, rush from deep ravines that open upon the village to the east and south, and throw their waters under two small stone bridges, which, almost hidden in ivy, form happy and appropriate features in this very picturesque scene. A port, in epitome, lies at a small distance from the

village, where the Lymouth oysters, which here sell for two shillings per hundred, are shipped for other places, and necessaries from Bristol imported for the consumption of the place and its neighbourhood.

Several hundred feet immediately above Lymouth, is another little village, called Linton. The hill on which it stands hangs over the bottom we have just described, and is ascended by a zig-zag path, a mile in length, connecting the two villages with each other. The toil of this ascent was so great, after a walk of seventeen or eighteen miles, that I gladly threw myself into an old great chair of

"Monumental oak,
"Which long had stood the rage of conquering years
"Inviolate,"

that held out its inviting arms, at the sign of the Crown, in the heart of the village of Linton. A short rest and a little food "renovated the man," and enabled me to include "the Valley of Stones" in the ambulation of the day. This extraordinary feature of country lies at the distance of little more than half a mile west of Linton, on the road from thence to Ilfracombe. The propriety of the appellation which it bears is allowed at first sight. The road from Linton,

after running between hedge-rows for a few hundred yards, turning a little to the right, opens into a broad valley formed by high rocky downs on either side; the bottom sprinkled with large stones, and the summits and sides scarred with rock. But this is only preparatory to the scene which a little inclination to the westward shortly displays. Here the same depression is seen, running parallel with the coast for nearly a mile, but much more fertile in its stony produce. The mountainous heights that now rise to the left, but partially covered with vegetation, are studded with mighty masses of argillaceous grit, which pierce through the thin coat of soil in all their rough and pristine nakedness. These are opposed to elevations on the other side of the valley, whose steep faces are hidden by an inundation of stones that have streamed from the higher part, and whose summits exhibit a line of ragged rock fantastical and grotesque in the extreme. Here the lover of Celtic antiquities may, with the aid of a little fancy, discover his favourite *Kist-vaens* and *Carnedds*, his *Logan-stones* and *Rock-basons*, the remains of Druid superstition; whilst the humbler admirer of Gothic story, will by the same magical assistance

trace sunken bastions, ruined battlements, prostrate walls, and fallen towers, the vestiges of extinguished feudal magnificence. A lofty conoidal hill, rising from the centre of the valley, one wild mass of broken stones, and crowned with naked pointed rock, is a most remarkable object in this singular scene.

Rivetted to this spot by the magical character of the place, I remained till night admonished me to return to my inn. I had seen "the Valley of Stones" richly illuminated by the setting sun, and faintly lighted up by the soft beams of an unkerchiefed moon, nearly at her full, with the accompaniment of a tranquil ocean, reflecting the golden radiance of the one, and the modest lustre of the other; you will therefore be surprised when I tell you that I had not seen it to *advantage*—such, at least, is my opinion. In nature, as well as in art, a *picture*, to produce effect, should possess such a correspondence of its parts, that the emotions excited in the mind by a survey of it, be neither contradictory in their nature, nor destructive of each other. Thus, for instance, a good painter would never think of introducing a polar sky, black and lurid with all the storms of Heaven, into the vale of Tempe, where every

object in the body of his picture raised ideas of tranquillity, felicity, and peace; nor would he, on the other hand, where he meant to represent nature in rocky ruin, throw over his scene the rich tints of cloudless suns and tranquil skies: and for this obvious reason, because the discordant ideas of happiness and misery, serenity and confusion, and the jarring emotions of pleasure and pain, confidence and alarm, produced by such incongruities, would distract the mind, and effectually prevent its settling with that steady attention on the objects before it, from which alone (in these cases) it receives gratification. Now this reasoning, I apprehend, will exactly apply to the "Valley of Stones," every feature of which is harsh and horrid; where all around is naked solitude, hopeless sterility, and wild desolation, the appropriate abode of want, and wretchedness, and danger; the scowling storm and mingled tempest. To produce, therefore, the most sublime effect which the spot is capable of, by confirming and increasing the emotions of astonishment and terror that the mind experiences on entering it, it should be seen not "amid the bright beamings of the gentle days," but in the sad and sullen season of winter,

when the angel of the storm is riding on his whirlwind, and pouring his terrors upon the earth; when the smitten cliffs of the valley blacken under the scattering lightning, and its hollow rocks reverberate the rattling thunder.

It was necessary for me to pass through the "Valley of Stones" again this morning in my way to Ilfracombe, and seeing it once more, under a cloudless sky, the opinions which I have just ventured to express to you were confirmed. I had not proceeded three miles, when, not being able to recollect the complicated directions with which my old female host favoured me at parting, I left the proper track, and wandered for two hours amongst such steep and intricate mountainous ways, as nearly exhausted my patience as well as strength. At length, however, after toiling up the side of one hill, and sliding down that of another, with a repetition which I began to think would be endless, I reached the hamlet of Lymouth, and procured a guide for the remainder of the day's journey.

Shortly after quitting this place we entered upon the bridle-road, which, for four or five miles, I take to be unparalleled in beauty and singularity. An enormous hill of steep decli-

vity towers up boldly from the ocean, along the side of which runs the road to Ilfracombe, sometimes presenting an open path, and regaling the eye with the Channel, and distant swelling hills of Pembrokeshire, at other times concealing itself between high hedge-rows, and shutting out the ocean from the view of the traveller, though its ceaseless tumultuous roaring continually reminds him of its proximity. But as we proceeded, the beauty of the road still increased; for darting into a thick wood of fine young oak trees, (which thrive surprisingly in the perilous and exposed spot wherein they have rooted themselves) it winds for a considerable distance in complete seclusion, and then suddenly opens upon the face of a precipice that requires strong nerves and a steady head to view with tranquillity and deliberation. Here the distribution of the parts which compose the scene—wood, and rock, and ocean—is extremely singular, and indescribably fine. The traveller, on emerging from the coppice, has instantaneously thrown before him an unbounded prospect of the English Channel; whilst immediately below him, at a most perilous depth, wild and disordered black rocks, chafed by the unremitted fury of the

waves, form the tremendous fore-ground of the picture. A lime-kiln in a little hollow cove on the shore, almost hidden by the dark high cliffs under which it stands, fringed nearly to their roots with shrubby oak trees, would make a striking object, were it not absorbed in the immensity of the objects that surround it.

My conductor (who, very unlike the generality of the North-Devon peasantry, could afford me no information beyond the names of the villages which occurred in our way) led me through Slattenslade, Madonny, Mannacot, and other sequestered little groupes of houses situated in the deep hollows and romantic dells so common in the north parts of Devon, and known by the name of *coombs*. These are all highly picturesque, and though surrounded by such lofty hills as intercept the beams of the sun for some part of the year, and only approachable by break-neck roads, man has notwithstanding fixed his residence in them, and animated their sequestered bosoms with industry and cultivation. Indeed, in days like the present, when "the times are out of joint," one can scarcely refrain from envying the situation of these villagers, who, if abstraction from the bustle of the world, and the cares of

crouded life, the jars of political differences, and the heart-burnings of religious disputes, can constitute felicity, may certainly be said to stand a good chance of possessing it.

The church of Trinser, planted upon a rising ground, excited my curiosity on account of its smallness, the western eaves of it not being higher, literally, than my elbow. An humble grave-stone, to the memory of Anne the wife of John Richards, bore an inscription so sensible as well as serious, that I could not refrain from transcribing it:

" God is alike both good and wise,
" In what he grants, and what denies;
" Perhaps what goodness gave to-day,
" To-morrow wisdom takes away."

The swelling downs which had occurred on my leaving Porlock, now returned again, except that they were here divided into fields by stone walls, a circumstance that by no means added to their beauty. After following their undulations for two hours, a different scene commenced. Within three miles of Coomb-Martin the road mounts a lofty down, which swells up into an immense *Dorsum*, (like the *Hog's-Back* near Guildford) flanked by tremendous hollows on each side, and throws at once

before the eye a prospect of unbounded extent and infinite variety; including the ocean, Lundy-Island, bold cliffs, spreading vales, and deep ravines, with the village of Coomb-Martin* on the shore below, and Mr. Davy's magnificent seat of Watermouth, placed at the bottom of a small cove, defended and adorned by a chain of rude black rocks.

Passing through Coomb-Martin, we ascended another tedious hill, and proceeded for four miles over a road which probably would have afforded us much fine scenery, had we not wanted day-light; since it looks occasionally

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* In Gibson's edition of Camden, vol. i. p. 47, is the following notice of this little sea-port:—"The addition of Martin is "from Martin de Tours, a Norman lord, who had great pos- "sessions here in the time of Henry Ist. The silver mines here "were first discovered in Edward Ist's days, when three hun- "dred and thirty-seven men were brought from the Peak in "Derbyshire to work here. In the reign of King Edward III. "they yielded that king great profits towards carrying on the "French war. After they had been long neglected, they were "re-entered in Queen Elizabeth's time, who presented a cup made "here to the then Earl of Bath, with this inscription:

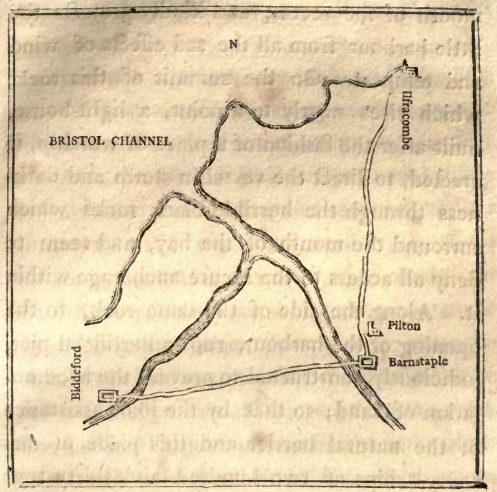
'In Martyn's Combe I long lay hid
'Obscure, depress'd with grosser soil;
'Debased much with mixed lead,
'Till Bulmer came, whose skill and toyl
'Reformed me so pure and clean,
'As richer no where else is seen.'

"These silver-mines were again wrought in not many years "since."

into those picturesque hollows or coombs which constitute the great beauties of North-Devon. I could, however, see nothing distinctly, and was therefore obliged to suppose every thing; not being able to elicit a single rational answer out of my companion, who indeed said nothing to me the whole day that pleased me half so much as his observation that we were entering Ilfracombe, about two hours ago.

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Biddeford, Sept. 10th.*

THE town of Ilfracombe is extensive and irregular in shape, and extremely singular in appearance. By the receding of the cliffs to the westward, a small cove is formed, perfectly embayed on three sides by high lands, and nearly shut up on the fourth by a bold rock which throws itself half-way across the

mouth of the recess, and kindly protects the little harbour from all the sad effects of wind and tempest. On the summit of this rock, which rises nearly to a point, a light-house, built after the fashion of a place of worship, is erected, to direct the vessel in storm and darkness through the horrible black rocks which surround the mouth of the bay, and seem to deny all access to the secure anchorage within it. Along the side of the same rock, to the opening of the harbour, runs an artificial pier, judiciously constructed to prevent the accumulation of sand; so that by the joint assistance of the natural barrier and this piece of masonry, ships of two hundred and thirty tons burthen may ride compleatly land-locked, and of course perfectly safe from all the violence of the weather. Over the gate of the pier a stone tablet, with the following inscription, informs us to whom the town is indebted for this valuable addition to its conveniences and advantages:—"This extensive pier, built some "years since by the munificence of the Bour-"chiers barons Fitzarine, earls of Bathe, and "vice-admirals of the place, was in the year "1760 partly rebuilt, lengthened, and en-"larged, by Sir Bourchier Wrey, bart. the

" present Lord and Inheritor of this Pier and " Manor."

The trade of Ilfracombe is but trifling, but its port is of considerable importance, since it affords an asylum to the many vessels that navigate the Bristol Channel, and which are often under the necessity of seeking shelter from the squally winds and troubled waters of this dangerous Mediterranean. A number of good houses, chiefly for the accommodation of strangers in the summer season, range along the side of this harbour, and the remainder of the town stretches for a mile in length to the westward of it. A pebbly shore in the same direction, with some good machines, afford convenient bathing. It would be unpardonable in *me*, who pretend to be a *puisne antiquary*, to quit the subject of Ilfracombe, without informing you that Camden, the great parent and luminary of British antiquarianism, once held the prebend of this place, which is in the gift of the church of Sarum.

A gloomy morning foreboded but a dull walk to-day, and threatened a change in the agreeable weather that has hitherto attended me; but I never anticipate evil, convinced of the truth of one poet's assertion, that " Sorrow

" never comes too late;" and of the propriety of another's question,

" What need a man forestall his date of grief,
" And run to meet what he would most avoid?"

I set off, therefore, in the drizzle, and took the road to Barnstaple. For several miles the country was as dull and unvaried as the sky was dark and sullen; totally devoid of wood, in wretched cultivation, and disfigured with the same stone divisions which I have before remarked. But amidst all this *natural deformity*, it was a relief to the mind to find some little *moral beauty* in the manners of several children whom I encountered on my way. The peasantry of North-Devon, as I have discovered for these two or three days past, are a very superior race to the labouring poor of the more eastern parts of the kingdom. Imbibing from the pure air of their native mountains mental vigour as well as corporal strength, they exhibit a sagacity and quickness which only require *culture*, to produce characters shining and energetic. The same faculties are observable in their children, who are not only ready in apprehending what is said to them, but as quick in returning rational answers to questions asked. Instead of shrinking from the presence

of the traveller, or looking scared and sheepish if he happen to address them, the young *Danmonii* generally are foremost in the conversation, with an "How d'ye do, Sir," "Your servant, Sir," or some such little colloquial civility. I confess I have been delighted with the respectful freedom of these little villagers; it becomes the sons of those who breathe the air of liberty, and indicates they have imbibed their manners from freemen, from men who feel their own weight in the scale of society, but who are at the same time as much aware of their *duties* as of their rights.

A long hill now gratified me with an extensive prospect, and displayed Barnstaple and the country round it, with some of the riches and fertility of Devonshire; a different view to any I had hitherto seen, as the Northern part of the county exhibits only rugged beauties, and majestic features. From this elevated spot Barnstaple appeared to great advantage, situated in a broad and fertile vale, which is belted with high hills, watered by the river Taw, and adorned with many elegant gentlemen's seats. A woollen trade, formerly carried on here with considerable spirit, threw a large sum of money into the town, and enabled its inhabitants to

beautify it with many very respectable houses; this trade has of late failed, but baize, silk-stocking, and waistcoat manufactories still give life to the place, which contains above four thousand inhabitants. Besides this source of wealth and population, the pleasing character of the country around, and the comparative cheapness of this part of England, have added to its inhabitants, by inducing many independent families to settle here entirely; a circumstance that renders Barnstaple by far the most genteel town in North-Devon. It boasts, indeed, some of the marks of a metropolis, balls every fortnight, and a regular theatre; and nothing is wanting to render it compleatly agreeable, save a *decent pavement*; the little oval pebbles with which its streets are studded, being not only extremely unfavourable to the shoes, but what is much worse, very injurious to the feet. A noble quay stretches along the river-side to a great length, terminated at one end by a handsome piazza, over the centre of which stands the statue of Queen Anne, with the following inscription:

ANNA.
Intemeratæ fidei testimonium ROBERTI ROLLE,
de Stevenstone, Agro Devoniensi, Armig.
1708.

It should seem that the Northern Devonians were not very anxious after the company of strangers, for they certainly take the best possible means of preventing them from visiting this part of England, by the execrable state in which they keep their turnpike-roads. Instead of making use of the advantages afforded them by their soil, and breaking the stone into small nodules, which, pressed together by the weight of horses and carriages, would form adamantine and impenetrable roads, they carelessly sprinkle these public ways with masses of stone larger than a man's head, and leave them to time and chance to be broken and scattered, to the great danger of the horseman, and the discomfort of him who is in a carriage. To me, indeed, an humble pedestrian, this produced but small inconvenience; I had picked up a companion, however, who suffered somewhat more from it—a little poney, about eleven hands high, to carry my baggage; which, what with specimens and purchases, had increased to an inconvenient size. To this Lilliputian Rosinante the large stones and deep hollows, rendered still more dangerous by the wet which had fallen, produced most disastrous consequences;

for he was, more than once, together with his burthen, prostrate in the mire.

The town of Biddeford is a striking contrast to Barnstaple. A large, wretched, and dirty place, with all the filth, inconvenience, and disagreeableness of a sea-port, and little of its bustle and animation. A bridge thrown over the Torridge forms the approach to the town on the north-east, and is, indeed, from its uncommon extent, the greatest curiosity belonging to it, consisting of twenty-four arches, the six central ones semicircular, the others elliptical. Sir Thomas Grenville in the fifteenth century begun this structure at his own expence, but his fortune being unequal to finish it, the bishop of the diocese granted indulgences, in order to raise money for its completion, which after some time was effected.

Biddeford, however, did not always make the desolate figure it now exhibits. Before our unfortunate dispute with the Americans, which, after absorbing one hundred millions of our money, and destroying one hundred and fifty thousand of our countrymen, terminated in the loss of an immense portion of the British empire, this place enjoyed a considerable

commerce with Virginia. Trade, however, like love,

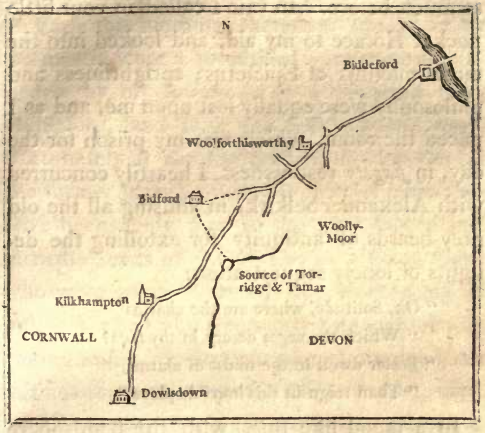
"At sight of human ties,
"Spreads its light wings, and in a moment flies."

Restrictions took place, the war broke out, and the American trade of Biddeford was wafted into foreign ports. A manufactory of coarse pottery at this place, from clay found in the neighbourhood of Barnstaple, keeps up a languid exportation at its quays.

I should act unfairly, however, by Biddeford, did I not mention one mark of the good sense and christian philanthropy of its inhabitants, exemplified in an *House of Industry*; an institution that confers more respectability on their town (inasmuch as it has for its ends the real good and best interests of society) than if its port were crouded with ships from every region under Heaven, and its custom-house receipts equalled the revenues of the Lydian Crœsus. What credit should I get for this assertion *upon Change?*

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Dowlsdown-Inn, Sept. 12th.*

RECOLLECTING the description which I have given of Biddeford, you will, I think, pity me, when I tell you I was confined to the inn there one whole day, by excessive rain, without a rational being to exchange a single word with. Never did I feel the discomforts of solitude, miss the sweet melody of the human voice, or long for your animating converse

so much before. In vain I called in your little pocket Horace to my aid, and looked into the moral maxims of Epictetus; sprightliness and philosophy were equally lost upon me, and as I paced the room, which was my prison for the day, in *fidgety* restlessness, I heartily concurred with Alexander Selkirk, in abusing all the old grey-beards of antiquity for extolling the delights of lonely sequestration:

" Oh, Solitude, where are the charms
" Which the sages descry in thy face?
" Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
" Than reign in this horrible place."

In a mood like this, with the hemisphere wrapt in cloudy darkness, and the barometer rapidly sinking, you will not be surprised that I formed the resolution of curtailing my intended tour, of leaving Cornwall and the Scilly islands to longer days and clearer skies, and passing by its eastern skirts into the southern parts of Devon. I recollected with dread the appropriate name which had been imposed by a wicked French wit on the country of tin, (*Pot de Chambre d'Angleterre*) and concluding that if it only *drizzled* in Devonshire, it must *pour* in Cornwall, I determined to turn my back at once upon its torrents, floods, and fogs.

Early this morning, therefore, though it by no means wore a propitious appearance, preceded by my *sumpter-horse*, I departed from Biddeford, and took the Kilkhampton road. Fortunately it happened to be market-day at the former place, otherwise I must inevitably have been again lost in the abominable and intricate roads of North-Devon. From those who were going to attend this weekly day of public barter, who frequently ride eighteen or twenty miles for that purpose, I obtained directions through a country wild, desolate, and unpicturesque, to Kilkhampton; without a single object to interest or amuse for the distance of two or three and twenty miles.

To this general censure, however, I ought to make an exception, since my *curiosity* was certainly as much *excited* by one particular in the walk of the day as I had ever experienced it to be; though the gratification was by no means proportionate to the intensity of the expectation. I had been informed, that my route would lead me near the spot where the two great rivers of Devonshire, the Tamar and Torridge, have their united source; extraordinary from the circumstance of their taking courses diametrically opposite to each other,

immediately on emerging into day—the one pouring his waters into the southern sea, and the other leading his stream into the northern channel. Anxious to see this curious natural phœnomenon, I hired a guide at the hamlet of Bidford, about fourteen miles from Biddeford, to conduct me to the wonderful spot.

John Prowse, who had now taken me under his protection, was a good specimen of the North-Devon peasant; lively and intelligent, stout and muscular, nearly six feet high, and with shoulders that would not have disgraced an Hercules. Besides this, he was upright as a dart, a grace he had acquired by having been some time in Colonel Orchard's volunteer fencibles. As men are usually most attached to that art, pursuit, or employment in which they most excel, so John's ruling passion pointed towards *wrestling*, or as he called it, in the dialect of the country, *wraxling*; which he confessed to me he loved better than victuals or drink. Living near the confines of Cornwall, he burned with all the emulation of a *borderer*, and observed triumphantly, that the Devonians were at last confessed to be *better men* than their neighbours; for in a great wrestling-match, held at a Cornish town in the vicinity, a short

time since, every Devonshire lad had thrown his Cornish antagonist, without receiving a single fall himself. He asserted it was the *prettiest play* he had ever seen; and on my asking him whether any accidents had occurred in the course of *these amusements*, he answered, nothing to speak of, only three ribs broken, and a shoulder dislocated! He would fain have tried a fall with me, whose skill, as an *east-countryman*, he wished much to experience; and I could perceive he did not hear me declare myself totally ignorant of the wrestling art, without some emotion of contempt. After a three-mile walk, John led me out of the turnpike to Kilkhampton, on which we were travelling, to a moor (called Woolly-moor) lying to the left hand of the road, and pointing to a rushy piece ground, informed me there was the source of the two rivers. I approached the sacred spot in silent rapture, and eagerly gazed round for the sight that should reward my toil; but how was I disappointed, when on reaching the place, instead of beholding two clear chrystalline streams issuing from a gently-swelling hill covered with a verdant carpet, (a picture which my fancy had kindly painted for me) there only appeared a quiet pool of water about twenty

inches in depth, and as many in breadth, from the sides of which distilled a silent ooze, that stole along an imperceptible descent of boggy ground of such unsafe footing as entirely precluded any further search after the Tamar and his brother. Where they first assume the form of rivulets, I could neither perceive nor learn; for John, satisfied with traditional authority, had never thought it worth-while (as he very wisely observed) to waste his time in hunting after that, which if discovered, could be of no use to himself or any one else. The pool, however, was clear, and as I thought somewhat might be due to its tutelary intelligence, I quaffed a palmfull of the element "*ad Genium loci*," placed a "stone of remembrance" by the side of the spring, and left it with this fiat of immortality,

"Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium."

We returned into the turnpike-road by a long path across the moor-grounds, which gave me an opportunity of remarking the miserable and destructive husbandry of these parts. The extensive tracts of land, called the *moor-grounds*, are of two descriptions, the high and low lands; the former chiefly prepared for grain, the latter

for hay and grass. Nothing can evince the viciousness of the agriculture here more than the low rent at which much of this ground is let; namely, from 7s. down to 3s. per acre. The land, it is true, in this predicament, is not of superior quality, being light and poor, a thin staple upon a basis of argillaceous slate; but a great quantity of it is such, as with fair treatment and good manuring might easily be increased to the value of from 13s. to 18s. per acre. This will be allowed, perhaps, when the system of agriculture is understood, by which the farmer is at present able to pay his rent for it. Intending to take a course of crops from his arable land, he first pares off its surface to the depth of two inches. The turfs thus cut, are piled into heaps, and burned on the ground. A quantity of ashes is by these means procured, called in this country *Beat*. This is ploughed in, and wheat sown on the land. Unrecompenced for its efforts by any dung or manure, the ground is next year compelled to bear a scanty crop of oats; and on the third year, the pernicious routine is closed by another compulsory produce of clover. Compleatly exhausted by these unmerciful requisitions, the farmer gives it up in despair for

fifteen or sixteen years; at the conclusion of which it recovers another surface, which is again pared off, burned, and ploughed in, and the unfortunate land forced to the same rotation as before. The low-lands are equally maltreated, or entirely neglected; so that where heavy burthens of hay might be expected, if draining and irrigation were practised, little else is now to be seen than rushes and moss, swamp and bog.

John, having accompanied me to the turnpike, heartily shook my hand, and bade me farewell; recommending to me at the same time, by all means to take a few lessons in *wraxling*, which was the most genteel and pleasant amusement a gentleman could pursue! A turnpike-road, (which, though not very good, had the advantage of being strait) carried me safely to Kilkhampton, without allowing me to commit any further errors in my route. This village is included within the county of Cornwall, and greatly excells in point of neatness and beauty any of the neighbouring Devonian villages. For this superiority it is indebted to the Grenville family, to which the barony of Kilkhampton has for ages belonged, and whose ancient seat, called Stow, lies within a

mile of the village. The munificence of the knight of old was frequently displayed in acts of pious superstition, such as the founding of monasteries, and the building of churches. Under the influence of this principle the church of Kilkhampton was erected and endowed by an ancient baron of the Grenville line, and being a light and handsome edifice, it forms, together with its pleasing and extensive church-yard, the chief ornament of the village.

The sexton's wife accompanied me to survey the inside of this place of worship, and an excellent local antiquary I found her to be; the appropriate inscription over the southern door, *Porta Celi*,* was, upon the authority of her husband, the name of the *good gentleman* who built the porch; and an iron casque and gloves, hanging up in the church, had formerly belonged (as the same infallible oracle assured her) to *Judas Cæsar*. A curious zig-zag Anglo-Norman cornice, which runs round the semi-circular arch of the southern entrance, gives an

* Under these two words are the figures 1567, the date of the porch. This inscription seems intended to have formed the following distich:

Porta Celi, the gate of Heaven;
One thousand five hundred and sixty-seven.

higher antiquity to this member of the edifice than what the body of the structure can claim; no part of which, I apprehend, was built before the beginning of the fifteenth century. The inside is airy and elegant, consisting of three parallel aisles of nearly the same height, divided by slender pillars (each consisting of only one block of stone) supporting Gothick arches, so obtuse as nearly to approach to the semicircular form. Sculptural notices of the Grenville family occur in every corner of the church, as well as elaborate and expensive monuments to the memory of different branches of it. Amongst the rest is one sacred to Sir Bevil Grenville, who was killed at the famous battle of Lansdown, fought the 5th of July, 1643, and commemorated by the noble stone monument now standing on the scene of action. A large vault under the eastern end of the church formerly received all the departed of this illustrious family, but being at length filled, it has been for some years blocked up. The old method of seating, in long fixed benches, prevails for the most part in the body of the church. A capacious font, and a curiously-carved wooden pulpit, afford other proofs of the antiquity of this place of worship.

Amongst the remarkables, however, I must not omit to mention the mode in which the bells (five in number) are rung. The management of this parish musick is a matter of pride and consequence in every country village; at Kilkhampton, some profit being attached to it also, the command of the belfry is still more desirable. A *self-constituted Directory of five laymen* had taken charge of these bells, and pocketed all the money allowed by the parish for the peals rung on particular festivals. This obtrusion on the rights of the church was deeply resented by its servants, the clerk and sexton; but being unable to manage the whole peal themselves, they were obliged to endeavour to compromise the matter, by offering to accept a proportion of the money arising from the belfry. With this proposition, however, the ringers very unreasonably refused to comply, under the pretence that as Moses and his brother did not partake the labour, they should not touch any part of the profit. What was to be done? The brothers in office could indeed prevent the ringers from going into the belfry, but then the parish must have lost its accustomed peals, and their own hands were insufficient for all the bells. A woman's wit

cut at length the Gordian knot, and brought them off triumphant in the dispute. My guide, the sexton's wife, provided with a hammer and nails, took her husband and the clerk into the belfry, and making them strain the five ropes, and bring them all to one point in the centre of the floor, she fixed them firmly there. Thus tightened, the least pressure of the rope of each bell produced a pulsation of its clapper; and introducing herself between the five, by the nimble motion of her arms, knees, and head, dame Partlet chimed a peal with such skill and ease as delighted and astonished the two gaping spectators, who found themselves, by these means, able to undertake the business of the belfry without the assistance of the insubordinate ringers. The ingenious contriver of the plan was so good as to exhibit her abilities to me, and went through all the varieties of double-bobs and triple-bobs, majors and minusses, with great exactness and facility.

My *cicerone* to the church having informed me the distance to Launceston was eighteen miles, (an hypothetical calculation, that convinced me at once it must be at least four and twenty) and that I should meet with *pure* good accommodation at *Dowlsdown-Inn*, (my present

quarters) which nearly divided the stage into two equal parts, I resolved to make this house the halting-place for the night; and accordingly continued my route through a country as naked and miserable as before, offering nothing that excited attention or interest, except *Bennets*, the classical and pleasing residence of Lord Dunstanville. Nor did this dearth of entertainment appear likely to be made up by quiet and comfort when I reached Dowlsdown. All without indicated the infrequency of the traveller's call for refreshment, and all within, an inability to afford it; a broken table, faithless chairs, unplaistered walls, and an unglazed window, pointed out but too plainly the poverty and wretchedness of the mansion. I would have proceeded to Launceston, but I had already journeyed thirty miles, and it was too late in the evening to attempt an addition of ten more to the march; for

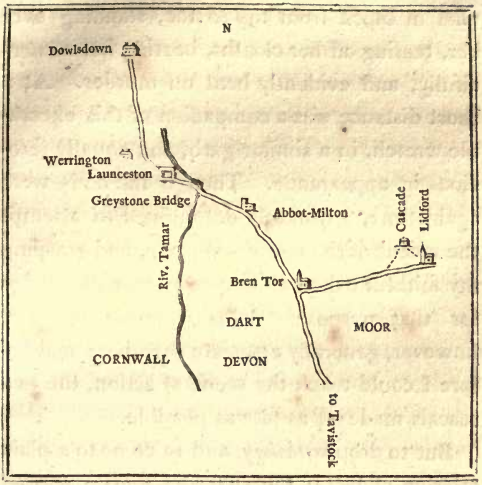
" By this the drouping daylight 'gan to fade,
" And yielde his roome to sad succeeding night,
" Who with her sable mantle 'gan to shade
" The face of earth, and wayes of living wight;
" And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright."

I had therefore nothing left for it, but to take up my quarters here for the night, and to draw

upon *philosophy* for a little patience to enable me to bear their inconveniences without ill-humour. But the ceaseless screams of two very noisy children, the provoking unkindness of the chimney, which smoked with unconquerable obstinacy, and the moanings of the poor mistress of the house, who was distracted with the rheumatism, would soon have exhausted all that *philosophy* could do, had I not called to its aid a much more powerful principle—*christian charity*; which whispers, that my hostess, pressed down with want, and sickness, and sorrow, has already afflictions enough to struggle with, without their being increased by any appearance of churlishness and dissatisfaction on my part.

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Lidford, Sept. 13th.*

I Claim the honour of a *civick crown*; whether or not I deserve it, you shall decide. I had passed the second mile-stone on the Launceston road this morning, when a vociferous cry of distress suddenly awakened my attention. Looking over an adjoining hedge I beheld a female prostrate on the ground, and a villain

clad in black from top to toe, standing over her, tearing off her cloaths, beating her unmercifully, and evidently bent on murder. At a short distance was a companion of this execrable wretch, in a similar garb, and equally ferocious in appearance. Though the odds were against me, I instantly determined to attempt the rescue of the oppressed party, and grasping my faithful oaken staff sprung over the hedge for that purpose. Villainy and cowardice, however, generally associate together; and before I could reach the scene of action, the two rascals made off as fast as possible.

But to drop *mythology*, and to come to a plain relation of facts; the suffering female was an unfortunate *duck*, panting and quacking under the talons of a *raven*, who was giving her feathers to the wind, and endeavouring to destroy her by the repeated strokes of his formidable beak. Having rescued the poor bird, and driven, as I thought, the enemies away, I continued my walk; but had not proceeded many steps when I again heard the same lamentable cries as before. Curiosity prompted me to watch for a few moments the operations of the respective parties, for the *manners* of *birds* are amongst the most curious objects of considera-

tion which the natural world exhibits. The two ravens, whom I take to have been husband and wife, had, it seems, only retired behind an adjoining hedge when I interrupted them, and, on my quitting the spot, with the characteristic boldness of the bird, returned to accomplish their frustrated purpose. Peeping over the hedge, I perceived one of them on the ground, about a dozen yards from his expected prey, which he gradually approached by interrupted hoppings, as if he meant (like a cat playing with a mouse) to amuse himself with the fears of the animal, before he destroyed it. Horror, in the mean time, seemed to have deprived the duck of the power of motion, and, fixed to the ground like a stone, she could only intreat assistance by her cries. The murderer continued his hops till he had brought himself in a parallel line with the object of his attention, when he made a full stop for a few seconds, enjoying apparently its expressions of terror, which were most loud and reiterated, and then, by one spring, bounded upon her back. It was now high time for me again to interfere; I threw a stone, therefore, at the spoiler, who immediately joined his companion that was sailing about in the air, and waiting to partake

of the banquet; and telling her, in a *deep base croak*, that the entertainment must be suspended; they both flew off, I presume, in dudgeon and disappointment. The poor maltreated duck I conveyed to the neighbouring cottage of a peasant, who informed me, that he experienced frequent losses in his poultry from these ferocious birds, which infallibly killed, picked, and devoured every fowl or duck that wandered far from home.

Rome, in grateful testimony of desert, raised a *triumphal arch* to the destroyer of her enemies, and gave *an oaken crown** to the preserver of her citizens. The former splendid honour let the sons of ambition enjoy, who seek the bubble —Fame, "vain breath of a misjudging world," by deeds of blood, and choose to march to glory through the path of waste and horror; be mine the guiltless wreath, that bound the brow for life preserved; the humble chaplet, exciting neither envy nor remorse, with this inscription written on its front—*Ob anatem servatam*, for a duck preserved.

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* Mos erat in veterum castris, ut tempora quercu
Velaret, validis qui fuso viribus hoste
Casuram potuit morti subducere civem.
CLAUD. STIL. l. 8.

Every step which I took towards the South mended the prospect, diversified the scene, and gratified the mind; population enlarged, agriculture improved, and the appearance of comfort increased. Two miles from Launceston the road to that town inclines to the right, whilst another, taking an opposite direction, shoots into Werrington park, a seat belonging to the Duke of Northumberland. I took the latter, being much the more agreeable of the two, and followed it till it again unites with the Launceston turnpike.

Just within the park gate stands the parish church, on a fine green lawn, distinct from all other buildings, and unincumbered with tombs or grave-stones; a modern costly edifice, but one amongst the many examples of much money being thrown away, or injudiciously expended. Bad taste directed the builder, and architectural deformity is the result. His intention was to erect a *Gothick* structure, but unacquainted with the peculiarities of that stile, he has introduced incongruous members and extrinsick ornaments, which have no more propriety where they are placed, than a fashionable cocked hat would assume on the head of a Druid. The house (a good modern mansion)

boasts nothing extraordinary, save its situation, which is indeed extremely beautiful; here the architect has displayed both taste and judgment. Placed towards the summit of a bold rising ground, the building commands a view of great variety and sufficient extent, looking down a sweeping declivity upon a winding vale, through whose wooded bottom the Aire is seen pursuing its meandring course, in a wide, brawling, shallow stream. A hill, abrupt and lofty, its broad face covered with deep woods of oak, presents itself in front; and on each side, the valley, after indulging the eye to a considerable extent, is lost insensibly amid the foldings of the higher grounds.

On the most elevated points of the hills, over against the house, are two structures, intended as objects from it—a *ruined castle*, and a *triumphal arch*. The former is sufficiently appropriate; many fortresses have been built in England, and many have fallen to decay; and the verge of Cornwall is as likely a spot as any other to exhibit these dilapidated remains of former grandeur. But the latter presents a disgusting incongruity; the ideas it excites in the mind are foreign to every thing we see around us, and all previous associations are of course im-

mediately broken in upon, dissipated, and destroyed. Add to this too, that although the impressions suggested to the imagination of ovations and triumphs be extremely agreeable, yet the pain of their sudden abruption counterbalances the pleasure of their possession, when the *judgment* begins to act; and coolly hints, that in this country the parade of classical military pageantry is known only by name, and consequently, that any sensible representations of it must be improper and misplaced.

How much more judicious would it have been in the ornamenter of these grounds, instead of building his triumphal arch, to have covered the point of his hill with a Celtick circle, or crowned it with a cromlech. He was in the very land of Druidism, and any neighbouring mountain would have given him the model of a temple or a Tolmen, an altar or a Cairn.

The approach to Launceston conducted me through St. Stephen's, a very ancient village, the church of which, dedicated to that saint, seems to have conferred a name on the capital of Cornwall, Launceston being a corruption of Llan-Staphad, or church of St. Stephen. This provincial metropolis climbs the side of a steep hill, the top of which is covered by a venera-

ble castle; vestiges of its former strength are yet visible in the Gothick gateway, dividing the town from the suburbs to the North, and the august remains of its fortress, whose strong towers and majestick keep convey an idea of the propriety of its former name, *Castle terrible*, famous in feudal story, and respectable in more modern history for the long and noble stand it made to aid the sinking fortunes of Charles I.

The church of Launceston exhibits a curious specimen of the state of the architectural art in the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is rather a low building, of three parallel aisles, the middle one, as customary, rather higher than the others. Its tower is a much more ancient fabrick, and stands detached from the body of the church, a mansion-house intervening between the two. Nothing can exceed the expensive splendour of the *outside* of Launceston church; every stone being covered with sculptural representations of shields, armorial bearings, and crests. The frequent recurrence of the *ostrich feather* amid this carved work was evidently intended as a compliment to the young king, Henry VIII. in the third year of whose reign the building was compleated, as appears by the date 1511, visible in one part of it. A

range of letters, sculptured on shields, runs round the church just beneath the windows, consisting of an apostrophe to the Virgin Mary, and two texts of scripture in Latin, wherein the name of Mary is also introduced. A representation of Mary Magdalen is introduced in the east end, in a reclined and penitent posture, and apparently "watering her couch with her "tears." The whole of the structure exhibits abundant proofs of that false taste, which, at the æra of its erection, began to deform the productions of art, but more especially of ecclesiastical architecture; when the *simplex munditiis* of the pure Gothick had given way to meretricious finery, and abundance of ornament was deemed only another term for beauty and elegance. Lightness, uniformity, and neatness, characterise the inside of Launceston church; and a good altar-piece and handsome organ form appropriate ornaments to its eastern and western ends. Nor must we forget to mention its curious polygonal wooden pulpit, exhibiting in the different faces carved Gothick niches, the canopies of which are finely fillagreed.

The shorter road to Lidford, which it was policy in me to pursue, as the clock had struck one, takes the Tavistock turnpike for two miles,

and then turns to the left towards Abbot-Milton. Shortly after this inclination my old friend the Tamar again introduced himself to me, but in a very different character to what he wore when I had first the pleasure of his acquaintance. He was now a deep majestick river, flowing silently through rich meadows, whose fertile banks bore grateful testimony to the fecundating influence of his waters. At Greystone-bridge he assumed peculiar beauty, and with the aid of his banks and woods, formed a scene strikingly picturesque. Here the Tamar, gently murmuring over a pebbly bed, leads his stream under a light and neat stone bridge, most tastily ornamented with a thin veil of ivy, and consisting of seven arches, which are but partially seen through the alders, willows, and other waving plants which fringe the margin of the stream. A narrow strip of meadow curbs the river on the left hand, skirted with an airy fillet of tall elegant ash and beech trees, backed by a solemn wood of oak. After shooting through the bridge, the Tamar makes a bold sweep to the right, which introduces a magnificent steep bank in the front of the picture, one deep mass of shade from top to bottom. A little cottage (the

turnpike-house) at the further end of the bridge, just discerned through the wood of the fore-ground, is a happy circumstance in the enchanting scene.

The road now passes over the bridge, and ascending a long and steep hill, bids adieu to the Tamar, who pursues his tranquil serpentine course to the ocean, after forming from his source to his mouth, the grand division between the counties of Cornwall and Devon. Receiving ample directions at Abbot-Milton, (for I was near the wilds of Dartmoor, and would therefore leave nothing to chance) I hastened on to Bren-Tor, a small hamlet three miles further, receiving its name from the singular situation of its church. This conspicuous edifice (which forms a sea-mark beyond Plymouth, at the distance of twenty-two miles) is planted at the north-western extremity of Dartmoor, on a vast mass of craggy rocks that shoot up from the summit of an high-pointed hill—a situation designated in the name it bears, Bren-Tor being the head of a rock. Like most other places of religious worship built on similar lofty spots, Bren-Tor church is dedicated to St. Michael; a practice which seems to have arisen with our ignorant ancestors from a con-

fusion of the two ideas of dignity and elevation, this Saint being the chief or head of all the angelick bands; "Michael of celestial "armies prince." The congregation is not formed by the inhabitants of the small hamlet immediately below it only, but of villagers from a great distance, who seem to regard the cloud-capt summit of Bren-Tor with particular veneration. The wild appearance of the country around this spot prevented it in former times from being visited by strangers; and so trifling was the intercourse maintained between it and the more populous and cultivated parts of England two hundred years ago, that Fuller, (a writer of that time) in his Worthies, describes the inhabitants of the village near this church, as a lawless tribe, wild as the ancient Scythians.

Near Bren-Tor the Oakhampton turnpike-road offered its services to Lidford, and at the distance of two miles opened a fine view to the left of the grand banks of the river Lid, whose rocks, and woods, and cascade had induced me to make a hasty march from Abbot-Milton, that I might have an opportunity of seeing them before the close of day. A small publick-house is the only place of accommodation in the town of Lidford; here I deposited my baggage, or-

dered food and beds both for my fairy sumpter-horse and myself, took a guide, and caught an hour of sunshine to visit the bridge of Lidford, the water-fall, and castle.

On my approach to Lidford, the river, which I had seen at a distance, approximated also, and about half a mile before I reached the publick-house, I crossed a small bridge thrown over a narrow gully, the sides of which were so obscured by wood, that nothing extraordinary was presented to the eye. But this spot only required observation to make it extremely impressive. Hither my guide again led me, and placed me in a situation where I could discover all its parts. The scene which here displayed itself bore a strong resemblance to that at the Devil's-Bridge, though upon a less scale than it, and accompanied with fewer circumstances of horror. A deep rocky rent, presenting on each side a rugged perpendicular precipice of nearly one hundred feet, but of a very narrow breadth, opens from a glen at right angles with the road; through whose gloomy bottom the little river Lid, violent even in infancy, pushes its waters with irresistible fury. Over the narrowest part of this chasm a bridge is thrown, and the turnpike road conducted. Below this, at a short

distance the fissure gradually spreads its rocky jaws; the bottom opens, and instead of the dark precipices which have hitherto over-hung and obscured the struggling river, it now emerges into day, and rolls its murmuring current through a winding valley, confined between magnificent banks darkened with woods, which swell into bold promontories, or fall back into sweeping recesses, till they are lost to the eye in distance. Thickly shaded by trees which shoot out from the sides of the rent, the scene at Lidford-bridge is not so terrifick as it would have been, had a little more light been let in upon the abyss, just sufficient to produce a *darkness visible*; for though the *imagination* do not like to have its *structures* intermeddled with, or its work performed for it, yet it requires some *materials* to be provided for its operations. As it is, however, the chasm cannot be regarded without shuddering, nor will the stoutest heart meditate unappalled upon the dreadful anecdotes connected with the spot.

Twenty years ago the connections of Capt. ——, of Exeter, prided themselves in their relationship with a youth, whose qualifications reflected credit upon them, and honour on himself. Courteous and kind, affable and ac-

complished, his acquaintance respected and his friends adored him. Life opened its fairest prospects, and a handsome competency promised a rich harvest of those joys which virtue and sensibility experience from the power of *doing good*. But amid this halcyon scene, the sky was suddenly obscured; exemplifying in a sad reverse the fallacy of human hopes, the instability of human happiness!

" Frail man, how various is thy lot below!
" To-day though gales propitious blow,
" And Peace, soft-gliding down the sky,
" Lead Love along, and Harmony;
" To-morrow the gay scene deforms:
" Then all around
" The thunder's sound
" Rolls rattling on through heaven's profound,
" And down rush all the storms."

Play, that insatiable devourer of human happiness and comfort, that relentless murderer of the fortunes and peace, the honour and feelings, the lives and souls of its hapless victims, fixed its harpy talons upon Capt. ——. In an unfortunate hour he was seduced into a gaming match, and rose up a considerable loser. The debts he had contracted in play were larger than his immediate means could satisfy, but *honour*, that word so often prosti-

tuted, and so little understood, demanded its prompt discharge. Stung with remorse at the complicated folly and criminality of his conduct, disdaining the idea of lying under pecuniary obligations to characters which his better feelings taught him to despise, tortured in heart, and wounded in every sensibility, he rashly resolved to free himself from agonies which he could not support, by *self-destruction*. But even in this moment of delirious fury, the shame and cowardice of the action he was about to commit, presented themselves to his mind, and suggested a wish to impose upon the world, by an appearance of accidental death. Full of the dreadful purpose, at the solemn hour of midnight he saddled his faithful horse, and rode with furious haste to the chasm which yawns beneath Lidford-bridge. The night, congenial to the deed, was dark and stormy;

> " Sky low'rd, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
> " Wept, at completing of the mortal sin."

Arrived at the fatal spot, he spurred the steed with violence, and pushed him at the parapet, in hopes that he would leap the wall, and thus become, in some measure, the agent of his death; but the instinctive fear of destruction natural to the animal rendered his efforts vain.

After repeated trials, Capt. —— dismounted; but still desirous of avoiding the odium of suicide, and of impressing the world with the idea of his being destroyed by other hands than his own, he tore his cloaths, marred his countenance with several gashes, and at one desperate bound sprung over the battlement, and plunged himself headlong into the black abyss of waters that boiled through their rocky cauldrons one hundred feet below him. His body, bruised, disfigured, and mutilated, was discovered in one of the hollows of the rock, a few days after the horrible catastrophe.

A story also is recorded of an unhappy maniack, who in a paroxysm of insanity, induced by misfortunes, darted from his bed at a cottage about three miles from the spot, and ran yelling and naked to the bridge of Lidford; over which he threw himself with a convulsive laugh, as if pleased to escape so suddenly from the world and its miseries, and to lose by one effort the recollection of those sorrows which had ruined his mind.

At the distance of a mile and half beyond the bridge, on the Abbot-Milton road, lay another object of our evening walk, Lidford-Fall. Turning to the right, and crossing two

fields, we entered a narrow path winding down the southern bank of the valley through which the Lid conducts his silver stream; the undulating line of the opposite steep, fretted with rock, and shaded by wood, gratified the eye to a considerable distance with beauty and variety. Arrived at the bottom of the dell, we turned to the left, and discovered the fall of water. My imagination, however, had run riot, and amused me with a delusive dream, which reality quickly dissipated. Here was none of that magnificence and sublimity which characterize the cataracts of Wales. Though the day had done all it could for me, by pouring down a deluge of rain, and increasing the stream to an unusual size—this only made it pretty, but could not make it grand. The cascade consists of two parts, an upper and a lower division, measuring together about eighty-three feet in height, and separated from each other by a jutting of the rock; but trifling as is the body of water discharged from above, the force is not sufficient to throw it into the segment of a circle. Instead of assuming this bold form, it streams down the smooth face of the rock in a narrow fillet of white foam. The scenery round, notwith-

standing, is in the highest degree romantick, sequestered, and pleasing.

Lidford castle claims attention rather from what it has been, than from the appearance it now exhibits. As early as the Saxon period a considerable town flourished on this spot, which, though it suffered incredibly by the Danes in 997, made a return of one hundred and forty burgesses at the time of the Domesday Survey, and afterwards in the reign of Edward III. sent members to parliament. The shell of a castle is the only index of its ancient dignity, the town itself having dwindled away to half a dozen wretched cottages. In this structure a stannary-court was formerly kept, which possessed the power of adjudging capital punishment on any criminal within its jurisdiction. At a period when the fierce unlettered baron followed rather the impulses of his passions than the sanctions of the law in his judicial proceedings, a formidable authority of this nature was doubtless abused, as often as prejudice or interest suggested it to be necessary. The frequency of this abuse, indeed, was so great, that the term *Lidford-law* became a proverbial expression, including the ideas of such monstrous tyranny and absurdity as should

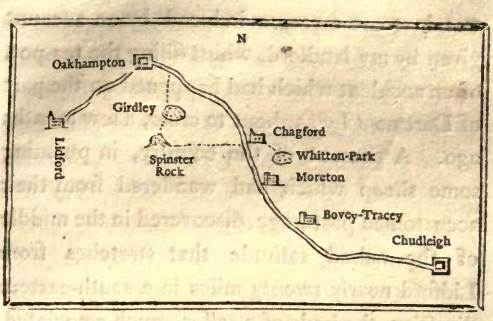
hang a man first, and try him afterwards. Courts-baron are still held in it, but of a very harmless nature, where some of the copyholders under the Duchy of Cornwall do their annual suit and service.

A short cut across the forest of Dartmoor, to Two-Bridges, has been suggested to me by my venerable landlord, but this I must unravel myself, as all the peasantry are busily employed in endeavouring to save a scanty harvest from the destructive consequences of the present wet season, and no guide is therefore to be procured. The idea of travelling twelve miles over a desolate moor, wild as the African Syrtes, without a single human inhabitant or regular track, has something in it very deterring, I must confess; but the old gentleman seems to be so very confident of the impossibility of my losing myself, that I have determined to try my fortune. Early to-morrow I intend setting off on my expedition,

" And He that hath the steerage of my course,
" Direct my sail!"

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Chudleigh, Sept. 14th.*

THE courage of speculation and that necessary for actual exertion are very different in their kinds. A man may easily be a hero in *design*, but to become one in reality is not an operation of such facility. Over-night I had determined to cross Dartmoor alone, but this morning, as the trial approximated, my resolution, like Acres's courage, gradually oozed away, and before breakfast was finished, I had dropped the idea, and determined to take a circuitous route by Oakhampton to the place I wished to reach. This resolve,

was in some measure induced by an account given by my landlord, whilst filling the tea-pot, of an accident which had happened on the part of Dartmoor I was about to cross, a few months ago. A peasant of the country, in pursuing some sheep which had wandered from their accustomed pasturage, discovered in the middle of the naked solitude that stretches from Lidford nearly twenty miles in a south-eastern direction, the body of a sailor, much emaciated, and in such a state as gave reason to think he had been lying on the spot five or six weeks. His countenance, however, was serene, and his posture composed; a small bundle of linen supported his head, and the remains of a faithful dog lay at his feet. Nobody could be found to tell who he was, or from whence he came; the parish therefore removed the body to Lidford, and gave it an humble grave in the churchyard there.

This anecdote not only produced the immediate resolution of changing my route, but awakened every tender feeling of my heart. In truth it was a simple sorrowful tale, that forcibly interested the imagination.—Fancy readily filled up the outline which I had heard, with the most affecting touches. She pictured the

unfortunate tar returning from a long and perilous voyage, big with the hope of once more embracing those connections whose beloved idea had lain in absence like a cordial at his bosom, and cheered his spirit amid the pain of toil and in the hour of danger; anticipating, perhaps, the transports of disinterested affection, when he should press his faithful girl within his arms; perhaps, the raptures of a fond father; perhaps, the proud exalted feelings of a grateful duteous son.—In a moment she called down the pityless storm upon his head; awakened the terrors of the thunder; threw the lightnings over the waste; and painted him wandering amongst the rugged craggs and gloomy hollows, benighted, ignorant, and alone.—She now presented him wan with toil and hunger; exhausted by fatigue; hopeless with disappointment; stretched upon the cold rock,

> " Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death,
> " Mix'd with the tender anguish Nature shoots
> " Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
> " His wife, his children, and his friends unseen;"

but still, amid the raging of the elements, and the pains of dissolution, preserving " that high " courage undismayed by mortal terrors,"

which characterises the British sailor; and meeting his inevitable destiny with tranquil composure.—Farewell, ill-fated Tar, and let a stranger's tear embalm thy memory! That gracious Being, who has so often covered thy head in the day of battle, and preserved thee amid the dangers of the sea, "when the stormy winds arose, and lifted up the waves thereof;" that gracious Being, who numbereth the very hairs of our heads, and before whom even a sparrow doth not fall to the ground unnoticed, will not forget *thee*, the sheep of his pasture, the creature of his hand; but when time shall have brought to pass the accomplishment of the ages, and death be swallowed up in victory, will call thee from "thy narrow dwelling" to those kind skies and halcyon regions which no tempests can obscure; no discord can approach; from which moral deformity and natural evil are alike for ever banished; where righteousness, peace, and truth meet together,

"And one unbounded spring encircles all."

I had already seen the Lid below the bridge, where, throwing back its banks, it opened to the day, and meandered through the meadows, a stream of some magnitude. I wished now to trace its progress for a short distance above

Lidford, where, pent up between the jaws of a chasm, it struggles for its narrow passage through opposing rocks. By deviating a little from the Oakhampton road, I had an opportunity of doing this, and soon passed up the dell to Skut's-Hole, a curious feature of the river, and where it first acquires any sort of interest. At this spot the rock, on which the Lid has hitherto flowed, is rent asunder, and through the fissure the stream tumbles the depth of twenty feet, agreeably broken by jutting and irregular stony masses. The total absence of wood is the only circumstance which prevents the scene from being fine. But it commands a most beautiful view—deep valley, lofty rock, and distant shade, terminated by Lidford town, its church, and castle.

The Oakhampton road, one of the best turnpikes I had seen in Devonshire, led me through an uninteresting country for five or six miles, which only varied its uniformity about two miles from the town, when the view to the right became extremely pleasing. The solemn ruins of Oakhampton castle, and the banks of the stream on which they stand, composed the picture. Like all towns distant from the metropolis, where people are content with comfort

and convenience, and not seduced by example or rivalship into splendour and expence, Oakhampton boasts no architectural beauty. But the clothing trade carried on in its neighbourhood renders it opulent and populous; though if there have been any decrease in its riches or inhabitants within these few years, it must be attributed to the fatal effects of *War*, that iron scourge with which Heaven, in the most wrathful moments of its vengeance, inflicts those nations which have incurred its indignation; that insatiate glutton, whose choicest food is human blood, whose sweetest musick is the orphan's cry and the widow's wailings; the touch of whose mace, "petrifick, cold, and dry," paralizes trade; stagnates industry; checks the progress of the arts and sciences; scares away the milder virtues; obliterates moral sentiment; and at once exhausts a country of its riches and population, and despoils it of its humanity and religion.

The noble remains of Oakhampton castle lie a mile from the town to the south; and though most of them are unintelligible from decay, yet the extensive area which they include, the solidity of their structure, and the advantages of situation, prove that this fortress, before it was

dismantled, must have been strong and important. A lofty keep, the dark scene of many a foul oppressive deed, rises magnificently from a large conoidal elevation, which is opposed on the other side of the stream by a steep wooded bank; the river meanders through the intervening meads, and washes with its waters the roots of the ruined walls. This spot was first chosen for the scite of a castle by Baldwin de Brionis, one of the Norman spoilers who attended William the Bastard in his descent on England. The hardy enterprize being crowned with success, Baldwin's exertions were rewarded by a grant of land in the western parts of Devonshire, which he constituted into the barony of Oakhampton, and built the castle for its honour or head. The family of De Redvers succeeded in the ensuing century to Oakhampton castle, from which it passed by intermarriage into that of the Courtneys. The steady attachment of the Courtneys to the cause of Henry VIth, rendered them objects of Edward's rancour, and the fidelity of Thomas brought him to the block at Pontefract in 1441, after the battle of Towton. John found a nobler fate in the field of Tewksbury, where he was killed fighting under the banner of the high-

spirited but unfortunate Margaret of Anjou. The possessions of the brothers escheated, in course, to the crown; and Oakhampton castle continued to be a royal fortress till the reign of Henry VIIth, who, on ascending the throne, restored the Courtney family to its honours, distinctions, and estates, and to this barony amongst the rest. But his relentless successor having discovered a secret correspondence between Hugh De Courtney and Cardinal Pole, by one act of uncontroulable tyranny deprived Hugh of his head, and by another of senseless barbarism reduced the magnificent castle of Oakhampton to ruins, and devastated its noble and extensive park. It is observed, however, by a very wise man, that "the wicked doeth "good, and knoweth it not." Henry, into whose mind the idea certainly never entered of obliging posterity by any thing he did, was busily employed, whilst laying waste the Oakhampton demesne, in preparing a feast for taste and feeling in future times; for amongst the many ruins which I have visited I know not one that has a fairer claim than this to the character of *picturesque*.

Having formed a casual acquaintance with a brother pedestrian, on the road to Oakhamp-

ton, whose route happened to be the same as my own for a few miles, I put myself under his guidance. The country was well known to him, and he promised, by making our walk to Chagford (where we were to separate) rather circuitous, to conduct me to two objects well worth seeing, *Gidley-Park*, and the *Spinster-Rock*. If *curiosity* be to be gratified, our sex, I believe, is as willing as the female one, to make a trifling sacrifice in order to indulge it; I therefore readily acceded to his proposition, and at the fourth mile-stone turned with him, from the Oakhampton road to the right, upon the wilds of Dartmoor. For a few miles our course stretched over this wide extent of naked barrenness, and gave me an opportunity of inspecting partially, a tract of country extremely singular in appearance. Dartmoor, for the most part, consists of granite rock covered with a thin layer of mould, which in many spots throws out a beautiful verdant carpet of short sweet grass, affording good pasturage for sheep. In other parts Nature has been more niggardly, and a black mantle of moss and heath covers the face of the wild. Its circumference may perhaps extend nearly to seventy miles, the interior of which is thrown into a series of hills

and depressions; the former terminating in rocky crags, fantastick and wild in shape and appearance; the latter, in some instances, darkened by thick woods. In these gloomy recesses resides the stag, in all his native vigour and wildness, affording to the Nimrods of Devon a sport which they follow with the most enthusiastick delight. Perhaps, indeed, no English hunting can be more animating than that of Dartmoor. Roused from his secret covert, the magnificent animal sweeps over a vast tract of unobstructed country; himself and his blood-happy pursuers full in view; whilst the winding of the horn, the shout of the hunters, and the cry of the hounds,

"Running round
"From rock to rock, in circling echoes toss'd,"

give a variety and beauty to the chace, that no inclosed country can possibly afford.

Upon the borders of Dartmoor lies the Royalty or Park of Gidley. This species of property is not infrequent in the western part of Devonshire, and seems to have been acquired by ancient grants from the Crown (in which Dartmoor was vested) to its subjects, of parcels of this waste, under certain reserved annual

quit-rents. That of Gidley is 3*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* which is still paid every year, at the court appointed to receive the same. A ruined stone mansion behind the present farm-house points out the former importance of the lordship. But the *park* was our object; an extensive tract of rocky ground, fruitful only in rabbits, but curious from the singularity of its appearance. A stone wall protects three of its sides, and to the fourth the river Teing forms a sufficient defence. With this stream the park unites by a very steep descent, the face of which is studded with enormous rocky protuberances, sacred to Celtick superstition, as the many fine rock-basons excavated in their level summits sufficiently evince. The roaring stream at the bottom of this hill, the wooded front of the bold bank that rushes to the clouds on the opposite side, the vast masses of venerable rock, grey with moss or dark with ivy on either hand, render this part of Gidley-park a scene very striking to the imagination. Much of its effect, indeed, will speedily be done away, by the destructive havock of its present possessor, who with a most Vandal-like want of taste, and perhaps with an equal deficiency of com-

mon policy, is despoiling the opposite bank of its beauty and interest, by cutting down all the half-grown oak with which it is covered.

Fording the Teing, not without hazard, for he was swollen into unusual fury by the late rains, we ascended a tedious hill at least a mile and half in length, and reached the *Spinster* or old-maid rock. This expressive name, which happily conveys the ideas of desolation and barrenness, solitude and individuality, will suggest to you in a moment the appearance and situation of the object in question. It is a vast natural acervation of granite rock, naked and rugged, forming the apex of one of the hills of Dartmoor, which rises in solitary sadness on the edge of the waste. The prodigious height to which it rears itself, rendered it an apt spot for the exhibition of priestcraft and the celebration of Druidical rites in times of yore, and the many rock-basons on the top, and circular arrangements of small stones on the sides, may be considered as vestiges of the holy mummery which was heretofore practised on this consecrated hill. The prospect from it is immense.

Leaving the Old Maid to the full enjoyment of her cheerless state, we dropped into the Chagford road, passing in our way through the Elysian

village of Hollowstreet, happily placed in a narrow valley, watered by the Teing, whose babbling stream is half hidden by the woods which fringe his margin. Huge rocks starting from the ground in every direction, give great beauty and singularity to this fairy region. The residence of Mrs. Southwell would have suited exactly the taste and ambition of Horace;

" Hoc erat in votis; modus agri non ita magnus;
" Hortus ubi, et tecto vicinus jugis aquæ fons,
" Et paulum sylva super his foret."

At Chagford my companion was to remain, having some business to transact there; but before our parting he filled up the measure of his courtesy, by putting me into the hands of another guide, who should conduct me to the extraordinary scenery of Whitton-Park, the rocking-stone in its neighbourhood, and leave me at Bovey-Tracey. The figure of this second *Hermes*, a taylor by profession, was so singular and diminutive, that I could not help suggesting to my friend a doubt of his ability to sustain the fatigue of a ten or twelve mile walk. Indeed, he seemed to be modelled exactly after Falstaff's incomparable portrait of Justice Shallow: " I do remember him at Clement's-
" Inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese-

" paring. When he was naked, he was for all " the world like a fork'd radish, with a head " fantastically carved upon it with a knife: he " was so forlorn, that his dimensions to any " thick sight were invisible: he was the very " genius of famine, and the w****s called him " *Mandrake*." The answer, however, of my late companion was, ' Never fear Tom Spindle; ' he'll tire you before the day is over.' Nor had we gotten on many hundred yards before I perceived, that without a check this would really be the case. Having nothing to carry but bones and muscle, Tom skipped on with the alertness of a flea; and whilst scaling the hedges, bounding over the stiles, and scouring along the road, ever and anon turned his head, and with most humiliating *sang froid*, desired to know if he walked too fast for me? I honestly confess, I never felt more humbled than on being thus beaten *at my own weapons*, by this shadow of a shade, this near approximation to non-entity.

Whitton-Park, like Gidley, is a royalty, originally carved out of Dartmoor, and granted to the subject by the Crown, with all those rights and franchises which anciently constituted the privileged districts called in our old statutes and

law-books *Parci*. Its scenery also is somewhat similar to Gidley-Park, but on a grander scale. The rocks are more immense, and shaded for the most part by the dark umbrage of some magnificent oak trees; which, throwing their giant arms over these hoary piles of stone, form an association highly interesting to the imagination. Here the solemnities of Druidical worship naturally rush upon the fancy; and the mind, awed and astonished by the scene around, feels for a moment those mixed and undescribable emotions, which rendered the hallowed seats of Druidical superstition not only venerable to its devotees, but awful to its exterminators:

" Here, Romans, pause; and let the eye of wonder
" Gaze on the solemn scene. Behold yon oak,
" How stern he frowns, and with his broad brown arms
" Chills the pale plain beneath him; mark yon altar,
" The dark storm brawling round its rugged base;
" These cliffs, these yawning caverns, this wide circus,
" Skirted with unhewn stone. They awe my soul,
" As if the very Genius of the place
" Himself appear'd, and with terrifick tread
" Stalk'd thro' his drear domain. And yet, my friends,
" (If shapes like his be but the fancy's coinage)
" Surely there is an hidden Power, that reigns
" 'Mid the lone majesty of untam'd nature,
" Controuling sober reason; tell me else,
" Why do these haunts of barb'rous superstition
" O'ercome me thus? I scorn them, yet they awe me."

The taylor, who had not visited the Logan-stone for five and thirty years, had totally forgotten its situation, and in endeavouring to discover it, led me down the banks of the west Teing at least three miles, nearly to Fingal-Bridge. But his ignorance proved to me a source of great pleasure, since it gave me a view of the banks of the stream, which are strikingly fine, diversified by wood and rock, precipice and slope, bold promontories and deep recessions. The river, too, is obstructed with rocks, which, checking the course of its furious tide, form at every step whirlpools and cascades, that shake the woods with an uninterrupted din. The Logan-stone, which we at length reached, lies in the middle of the stream, near the paling of Whitton-Park. From its appearance and situation, I boldly pronounce that art had no hand in forming or placing it. Its shape approaches to an irregular cube, one angle of which has worn for itself a socket in the head of a large subjacent rock. At present it has no oscillatory motion, though my guide insisted that five and thirty years ago it might have been moved by a child. Its weight may be about twenty tons.

Our route through Moreton to Bovey-Tracey conducted us along a true Devonshire road, running between high banks, and canopied over-head by the trees that intermingle their branches from the opposite sides. A gateway, or accidental aperture in the hedges, let in the surrounding country, and afforded us a view of the lofty hills to the left, and the rich valley to the right which accompanied our progress. At Bovey-Tracey I had intended to sleep, and therefore parted with Spindle as soon as the town was in view; but the wretched appearance of the village, and the melancholy exterior of two hovels which the people of the place called inns, determined me to proceed to Chudleigh, in spite of rain and darkness.

"The stars,
"That Nature hung in heav'n, and filled their lamps
"With everlasting oil, to give due light
"To the misled and lonely traveller,"

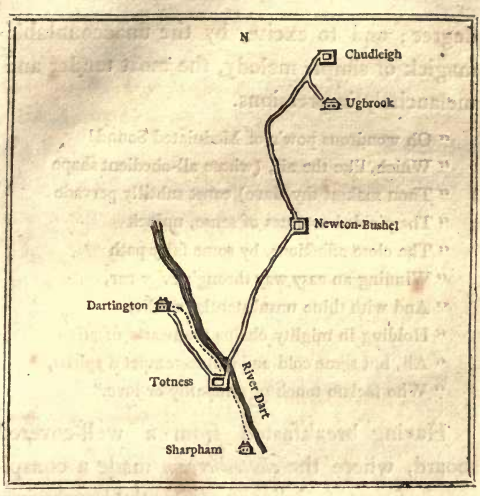
were totally extinguished, and my jacket was completely soaked; but the horrors of an *alehouse-bed* were fresh in my recollection, (for no longer ago than last night I suffered the *pains* of such an *accommodation*) and weighed down the idea of present inconvenience. I pushed on, therefore, through dirt and wet,

another four miles, and am rewarded for my energy, by a cheerful fire and smoaking board at the Clifford-Arms. But now to supper and to-bed;

"To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new."

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Totness, Sept. 16th.*

I WAS awakened this morning by the chiming of Chudleigh bells, which play for four minutes and a half, at the hours of one, five, and nine. The tunes consist merely of *changes*, but these are so well adapted, as to produce an effect plaintive and agreeable in the highest

degree; and to excite, by the unaccountable magick of simple melody, the most tender and melancholy impressions.

" Oh wondrous pow'r of Modulated Sound!
" Which, like the air, (whose all-obedient shape
" Thou makest thy slave) canst subtilly pervade
" The yielded avenues of sense, unlock
" The close affections, by some fairy path
" Winning an easy way through ev'ry ear,
" And with thine unsubstantial quality
" Holding in mighty chains the hearts of all;
" All, but some cold and sullen-temper'd spirits,
" Who feel no touch of sympathy or love."

Having breakfasted from a well-covered board, where the *clotted-cream* made a conspicuous figure, (a delicacy which the housewives of Devonshire exclusively prepare) I rambled out to visit Chudleigh rocks, some remarkable precipices, half a mile from the town. These stupendous masses of lime-stone heave their aerial heights out of a deep narrow valley, through whose hollow wooded bottom the river Teign throws its roaring flood unseen. Nature, who ornaments with incomparable taste, has relieved the flat broad face of these prodigious elevations with mountain plants, scattering them down the steep; or making amends for their absence by throwing an elegant drapery

of ivy over the parts where she has denied her trees. Half-way down the cliff is a spacious cavern, dry and high, penetrating the rock in a strait direction about thirty-feet, then becoming lower, and turning to the left. I did not pursue its intricacies, lest I should have gotten into a similar scrape with an unfortunate dog a few weeks ago, who is said *(credat Judæus)* to have wandered amid the labyrinths of the cavern for three days, and then to have emerged into the light, at a fissure five or six miles from the aperture at which he entered. These rocks are the valuable property of Lord Clifford, whose labourers are constantly employed in digging and burning the choice lime-stone of which they consist.

Every mile now warned me of my approach to populous towns, busy sea-ports, and great turnpike-roads, by the gradual disappearance of that simplicity and civility which mark the manners of the more sequestered North-Devonian peasantry. My sumpter-horse and his master began to excite not only curiosity but impertinence; and I found I must arm myself with a considerable share of *sang froid*, to pursue the remainder of my journey in tolerable comfort. As I was driving my little poney by

Ugbrook, the noble park of Lord Clifford, two women, ragged and miserable, standing in the road, seemed to be mightily struck, as well as amused, with my appearance; and after a hearty laugh, one of them exclaimed, in a tone evidently intended to reach my ear, "A luks a grut deal more lik a baggar than a does lik a gentleman." I looked sheepish, but it was only the retort-courteous of the poor creatures, for I had begun to *feel proud at heart*, by a secret comparison of my own *splendour* with their tattered wretchedness.—Another ordeal awaited me in Newton-Bushel, a large well-peopled town, where every face that I encountered exhibited a grin; it was therefore matter of no small joy to me to be fairly out of the place, and on the road to Totness. The country is here rather flat, but commands at the same time a fine view, that stretches over the wide extent of intermediate ground to the distant rocky heights of Dartmoor; amongst which, I recognized the scathed naked head of the unfortunate *Spinster*.

About two miles before I reached Totness, a solitary dwelling to the right of the road engaged my attention. The grounds behind, shooting down towards the Dart, were ex-

tremely pleasing, and the *tout ensemble* of the demesne conveyed the ideas of virtue and peace, seclusion and comfort. I had returned to the road, and was busied in rebuilding part of the house, putting the garden into order, and making some little alterations in the grounds, when my reverie was interrupted by an old soldier, who limped by me on two crutches. There were several reasons why I should speak to this unfortunate son of glory, and amongst others, that I might learn to whom the mansion, which I had just visited, belonged. After a little pardonable egotism, "that he had been many years in the army, had seen numerous battles, had left an eye, an arm, and a leg *upon the field of honour*,* and was now begging his way with

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* "*Prince Henry.* Why thou owest Heaven a death.

"*Falstaff.* 'Tis not due yet; I would be loth to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter: Honour pricks me on. Yea, but if Honour prick me off, when I come on? How then? Can Honour set a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is Honour? A word. What is that word, Honour? Air.—A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Is it insensible, then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with

the remainder of his body to his own parish in the neighbourhood;" he gave me to understand that the place was called Gatcombe, and had, about twenty years ago, belonged to a Mr. ******. This person, it seems, exhibited one of those instances of uniform and unmixed depravity, which, for the happiness of mankind, are seldom discovered in society; a character wherein there was no shade of virtue, no approximation to any thing praise-worthy, or even negatively good. Possessed of a fine income and a delightful retreat, fortune had given him the means of communicating happiness to others, and insuring it to himself; but a *taste* for wickedness, an unnatural passion for vice, on account of its hideousness and deformity, rendered him a terror to the country around, as well as the self-tortured victim of wretchedness and horror. One trait will be sufficient to mark the extreme villainy of his character. During the darkness and silence of midnight it was his practice to steal from home into the fields or folds of the neighbouring farmers, and

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the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it: Honour is a mere scutcheon, and so ends my Catechism."

there by some infernal means to destroy the yearling sheep or lamb, as convenience and opportunity permitted. In the morning he would stroll, as if by accident, by the scene of his nocturnal machinations, and condoling with the farmer, would suggest that as the carcase was unfit for the larder, it might be sent, when skinned, to his kennel, for the use of the pack which he kept. The request was usually complied with; but instead of applying it to this purpose, he would rob even the dogs of their due, and supply his own table with the unhallowed spoil. This complicated wickedness was carried on by ****** for several months, to the astonishment of the neighbouring farmers, who firmly believed their flocks and herds were under the influence of witchery; but vengeance at length overtook him. His villainy was discovered to the world, and to make the pain of detection more insupportable, Providence ordained that his own daughter should be the betrayer of the secret. Immediate flight saved him from the penalties of the law; and he long lived, and perhaps exists at present, a miserable outcast, a wretched likeness of the vagabond Cain, hated of men, and accursed of the LORD.

What different emotions do moral deformity, and the absence of natural beauty, excite in the mind! Take Nature in her most rude and savage state; observe her amidst naked solitudes, barren rocks, and cheerless deserts; view her under brazen-vaulted skies, or polar darkness; see her deluged by inundations, scathed by lightning, or rocked by thunder; though awful, she will not be horrible; though robbed of loveliness, she will not be disgusting. But when we contemplate a human character which is destitute of virtue; in which the moral principle is extinguished, and all the traces of its great Original are obliterated; taste and feeling are equally shocked, and the soul recoils with detestation from an object of such nauseating and unmixed deformity.

Totness boasts a situation perhaps unrivalled in point of beauty. From the margin of the river Dart it climbs the steep declivity of a hill, and stretches itself along its brow; commanding a view of the winding stream, and the country in its vicinity, but sheltered at the same time by higher grounds on every side. The piazzas in front of the houses in some parts of the upper town, and the higher stories projecting over the lower ones, are manifest proofs

of its antiquity; a claim which is strengthened by the keep of its castle, a very large circular building turreted, rising from an immense artificial mound, the enormous work of one branch of the De la Zouche family. The deep thunder of a mastiff's voice, and a board threatening spring-guns and steel-traps to intruders, prevented me from gratifying the curiosity which I felt to see the interior of this building. I turned, therefore, into the *church*, where I knew I should meet with a better reception. This is an old edifice with an highly-ornamented tower, but now under reparation, from the falling of one of the fret-work pinnacles (smitten by lightning) in February 1799, upon the southern aisle and portico. Providentially no one was in the church at the time of the accident. One instance of perverted taste strikes the eye on entering this fabrick; a fine old *Gothick* skreen of stone and wood divides the chancel from the body of the church, within which the parish have erected a most superb and expensive altar-piece, of *Grecian* design, a classical semi-dome, supported by Corinthian pillars. Would, there were a heavy tax upon such incongruities! I think it would be more

productive than most of the modern contrivances of financiers to raise money!

The foot-road to Dartington, the seat of —— Champernoun, esq; two miles from Totness, is highly interesting, creeping through the meadows which curb the broad transparent river Dart, whose distant hanging banks are visible in all their beauty. This mansion is a great mass of buildings, which anciently formed three sides of a square. A noble hall of large extent and good architecture, (dating back probably to the beginning of the 15th century) with other offices, occupied one wing of this range; another on the opposite side, consisted of buildings now used as barns, stables, &c. but evidently not intended for such originally; and the dwelling-house formed the central part of the structure. This portion seems to have been intended at first for the residence of several families, since it was divided into distinct tenements; a circumstance which has given rise to a tradition, that it was formerly inhabited by a community of Knights Templars. I cannot, however, accede to the opinion, as neither the elaborate Camden, nor the accurate Tanner, sanction it with their authority; on the con-

trary, the former, if I mistake not, tells us it was the head of the barony of the *De Martins*, the lords of Keims in Wales;* and the latter does not mention it, as he certainly would have done, had it been at any time a religious house. It came into the possession of the Champernouns in the reign of Henry VIII, the last in the male line of which very ancient family, Rawlin Champernoun, died the 12th of January, 1774. The taste of the present owner of this seat is evinced by the many noble monuments of the arts which he has brought from Italy. Painting seems to have engaged his chief attention, and two exquisite landscapes by the first master of the old Italian school, and a sleeping Venus, a perfect wonder of art, bear ample testimony to the skill and judgment of his selection.

Quitting Dartington, I re-traced my road to Totness, and continued to pursue the banks of the river as far as Sharpham, the seat of Mr. Bastard, three miles below the town, a very different scene to that which I had just left. In lieu of ancient walls and nodding turrets, all was modern beauty and classick taste. The

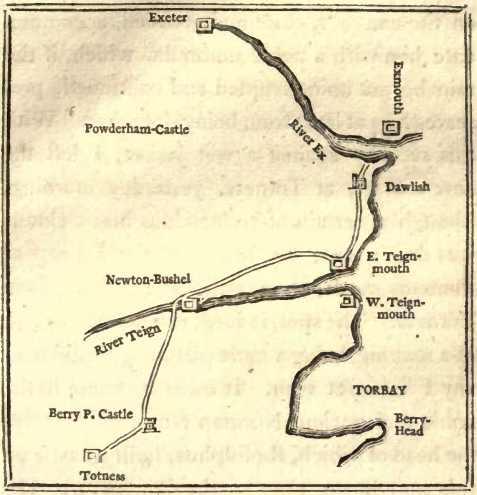
* Camden Brit. edit. Gibson.

house is built of stone, on a plan simple, elegant, and convenient; but its chief charm arises from the happiness of its situation, the brow of a thickly-wooded declivity which rises from the margin of the Dart. Placed on this commanding spot, it catches through the shades a view of the river skirting the park, to the left; but this is lost as it winds round in front of the house, stealing quietly under the steep mantled hill on which the mansion stands, and giving only its opposite bank to the eye. Willing, however, to make a recompence for this temporary desertion, it bursts again upon the view in a grand lake-like reach to the right, and disappears at length between lofty banks, which present one broad, undulating surface of magnificent uninterrupted wood.

On my return the river had swollen to an unusual height, entirely covering the meadows in its neighbourhood, (for it was spring-tide) and regaled me with a very fine *lake-scene*, beautifully terminated by the town of Totness, its pinnacles, and castle in the distance.

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Exmouth, Sept. 17th.*

EACH successive day affords me matter of rejoicing, that I did not pursue my intended route through Cornwall. Bad shelter, indeed would her barren hills and naked rocks have given to the dripping traveller in this uncertain weather, when almost every hour brings with it a new storm. The roads of Devonshire,

on the contrary, close and wooded, accommodate him with a noble umbrella, which, if the rain be not uninterrupted and continued, preserves him at least from being drenched. With this security against a wet jacket, I left the Seven Stars, at Totness, yesterday morning, (though a curtain of tremendous black clouds was drawn over my head) to take a peep at Pomeroy-castle, two miles and a half from Totness. The spot, indeed, was worth the risk of a soaking, being a more picturesque ruin than any I have yet seen. It owes its name to the noble and ancient Norman family de Pomery; the head of which, Radulphus, built a castle on this spot in the time of the Conqueror. His successors resided here in all the cumbrous magnificence of feudal state, till the reign of Edward VI. when it passed into the hands of the *Seymours*, whose descendant, the Duke of Somerset, has it at present. Nothing can be more romantick or sequestered than these ruins, which stand on the summit of a bold rising ground, surrounded by distant elevations of still greater height. The deep gloom of venerable woods spreads itself over hill and dale on every side, concealing these solemn remains from the common eye, and reserving them for

Barker delin.t S. Alken fecit.

Cullone Church Somersetshire.

180 a Published as the Act directs by R. Cruttwell, Bath.

the investigation of curiosity, and the contemplation of taste. The building appears to have been originally quadrangular, having only one entrance. This consisted of a double gate, the first machicolated, between two angular bastions. A rich vest of ivy spreads itself over this member of the structure; lofty trees conceal the broad faces of the walls, and only permit an occasional peep at the broken turrets, and dismantled windows; and various shrubs, artlessly scattered by the hand of Nature over the interior area, and around the Gothick entrance, complete the magical beauty of the scene.

The lofty over-canopying hedges prevent the eye from being very excursive in the road from Berry to Teignmouth, which led me again through Newton-Bushel, and, having passed the river Teing, ran nearly parallel to its banks to the spot where that stream discharges itself into the ocean.

The town of Teingmouth, you know, is one of the Devonshire watering-places, and puts in a fair claim to a preference over all the others. Immediately in front the broad interminable ocean spreads its ever-varying expanse; to the right, a river, wide and majestick, rolling its waters between gently-rising and well-wooded

hills, stretches for several miles, and is terminated by the black sides and rocky summits of Dartmoor; and to the left, a long range of dark arenacious cliff presents itself, full of caverns and recesses, and finishing in a rocky crag of a similar substance and appearance, and of a most grotesque and fantastick form. Various conveniences, also, combine to render this a most desirable summer residence. The bathing is particularly good; the machines well contrived; the lodging-houses pleasantly situated; and the inhabitants supplied, by some excellent local regulations, with plenty of the fine fish caught on the shore, before any of it is sold to the dealers, who come to purchase from afar. The trade of Teingmouth consists of some commercial intercourse with Newfoundland; the exportation of clay, and the importation of coal; carried on chiefly in craft built at the place, where there are conveniences for launching vessels of one hundred tons. The clay exported is brought from Bovey, for the most part, by a canal, and dug on the property of —— Templar, esq; who, with the only true patriotism, is indefatigably employed in promoting the solid interests of his country, by improving agriculture, and encouraging manufactures. Having similar

properties with the clay of Staffordshire, large quantities are sent thither for the purpose of being worked, and coal is freighted back. Part of it also is manufactured into pottery at Bovey, where Mr. Templar has constructed works; but such are the advantages and magical effect of an *immense* capital over one very inferior, that the articles can be made in Staffordshire of Bovey clay, brought back again, and sold at Bovey for less money than the same pieces would fetch when manufactured on the spot where the clay is dug.

The recess of the tide permitted me to take the shore to Dawlish, and wander amongst the curious caverns which the ocean has scooped in the lofty sand cliffs that stretch between Teignmouth and that place. Very inferior in point of beauty and interest is the latter to the former bathing-place. Every method which bad taste could suggest, to rob the village of its native simplicity, has been adopted; such as a long line of uniform modern houses, in front of the wild indomitable sea; Gothick structures of mud, and cottages costly and superb, having nothing to entitle them to the name but their thatched coverings; all unsuitable to the situation in which they are placed, and (when

combined) conveying the idea of a bathing-place in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, where the bucks of Cheapside and White-Chapel go in the summer to *wash and be clean*, rather than a peaceful and sequestered marine village on the shore of South-Devonshire.

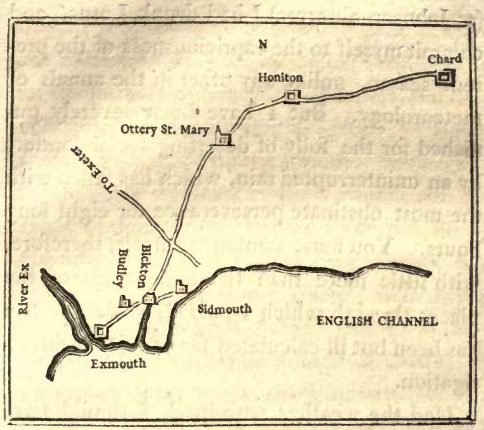
Exmouth, (from whence I date this) lying three miles to the eastward of Dawlish, on that side of the river Ex, is by no means liable to the criticism which I have just ventured to throw out on the latter place. It is a town of some extent; and, therefore, neither simplicity, nor picturesque beauty, is expected in it. The houses may be grouped into any forms that fancy suggests, without the builder incurring the censure of having spoiled the scene by incongruous architecture.

The variety and grandeur of the view which the houses near the shore command, is seldom equalled. Old Ocean opens his heaving bosom to the south, and the Ex comes sweeping down in a broad sheet of water, from the opposite point. This estuary, sprinkled with shipping, inclosed between hills, which are ornamented with groves and mansions, castles and cities, presents, at full tide, and under a calm sky, the picture of an Italian lake. Limited

in time, I could only visit, by a distant view, scenes which promise much gratification on a closer inspection—Topsham, and the beautiful country around it; Exeter and its venerable cathedral; the bold, broad, commanding summit of Hall-Down; and the magnificent seat and grounds of Mamhead, which ornament its eastern declivity. Powderham-castle is immediately opposite to me, but I do not regret my inability to visit it, since its situation is low, and the grounds about it are uninteresting. Besides, I have no passion for *magnificence*, unless it be united with a little *taste*; and should therefore receive no sort of pleasure in contemplating such gew-gaws as a silver grate plaistered over with gold, and three window-curtains, on each of which has been lavished the enormous sum of seven hundred guineas!!!

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Chard, Sept. 19th.*

THE cheerful society and courteous hospitality of some kind friends, whom I accidentally met at Exmouth, rescued me from that *ennui* which a solitary wanderer like myself would otherwise have experienced in a strange place, and shut up in a publick-house during one of the most inclement days I ever witnessed. The morning, however, of to-day, falsely flattering, tempted me to quit Exmouth, where

(as Johnson observes) I had drunk Lotus, and commit myself to the capriciousness of the present season, unlike any other in the annals of meteorology. But I have been severely punished for the folly of deserting social comfort by an uninterrupted rain, which has fallen with the most obstinate perseverance for eight long hours. You must content yourself, therefore, with little more than the bare names of the places through which I passed, since the day has been but ill-calculated for enquiry or investigation.

Had the weather permitted, I should have led you through the grounds of Bicton, the seat of Lord Rolle, about six miles from Exmouth, where the *patula fagus*, the wide-spreading beech, rising to an enormous size, indicates to the planter the propriety of cultivating a tree so evidently congenial to the soil of the country. I would have carried you into the woollen-manufactory of Newton, a few miles further on. You should have also visited the old conventual church of Ottery St. Mary, built by John de Grandison, bishop of Exeter, who, by wonder-working eloquence totally unknown in these days, persuaded the clergy of his diocese to surrender into his hands a considerable part

of their property during their lives, and to leave the remainder of it to him after their deaths, for the purpose of endowing churches, building colleges, and establishing hospitals!! But of these places, and Honiton to-boot, (remarkable for holding its market on a *Sunday*, till the reign of King John) I must refer you for an account to those more fortunate tourists who have trodden the same course with myself under smiling heavens. Sufficient for me be it to say, that I am safely housed at Chard, the first town on the borders of Somersetshire, after a journey which threatened me more than once with the pains of drowning.

Chard is remarkable for the height of its situation, the spot on which it is built being pre-eminent over all the country between the two seas. At the end of one of the intersecting streets is a copious stream, which seems to issue from the highest point of land hereabouts, since its waters might be easily conducted in a direction opposite to that which they now take, and led with equal facility either into the north or south channel. The town formerly sent representatives to parliament; but it was relieved in the second of Edward III. from the *burthen* of this privilege, on account of its poverty,

and inability to *maintain* its members;* for you know, the senators of old, less disinterested than those of modern days, received a regular allowance from their constituents, as a remuneration for the trouble and expences which they incurred in their attendance on parliament. But how have patriotism, generosity, and disinterestedness increased in modern times! the senator now volunteers his services to the publick; and instead of receiving a reward for his labours from his constituents, will even put himself to charge and inconvenience, that he may have the *pleasure* of attending to their interests in the House of Commons.

Your's,

R. W.

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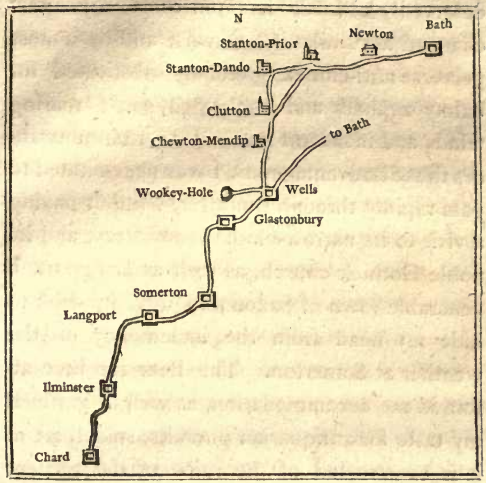
* Propter causam paupertatis.



LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR, *Bath, Sept. 21st.*

"Inveni portum, Sors et Fortuna, valete!"

CONGRATULATE me, my dear Sir, on having once more reached my *home*, the best refuge from the tempests of heaven, as well as the storms of life. Fortune, with that capriciousness for which she is so generally and

deservedly abused, has for some days past changed her smiles into frowns, and by a most perverse anti-climax, gradually substituted for balmy zephyrs and unclouded suns, roaring winds and incessant rain. Under circumstances thus disadvantageous, I was necessitated to pass rapidly through Ilminster, without paying a visit to its narrow-cloth manufactory, and its noble Gothick church, as well as Langport, a venerable town of Saxon antiquity, in order to hide my head from the inclemency of the weather at Somerton. The Bear inn here afforded me accommodation, as well as gratified my taste for antiquarian pursuits, since part of it is constructed of the ruins of the ancient castle of Somerton, and other vestiges of the fortress are visible in some old walls behind it. Unnoticed as this town is in the annals of modern times, it boasted an honourable name in days of yore. Here Ina, the Saxon Justinian, the hero, and the legislator, built a palace, and resided; administering in justice and impartiality those laws which he had framed in wisdom and policy. Here also the ruthless Danish leaders Huingar and Hubba, having taken the place, exhibited cruelties which language seems to labour in vain to describe; and here, in later

times, the unfortunate John king of France was doomed to spend part of his sorrowful captivity in gloomy solitude. But the ruins behind the Bear inn are the only vestiges of antiquity which Somerton lays claim to. The present town is chiefly constructed from the produce of some blue lyas quarries in the neighbouring hills, and stands in a country rich, beautiful, and highly cultivated, rising into noble hills, and opening itself on every side into fertile flats and productive vallies.

As I passed over the hills to the northward of Somerton this morning, a favourable sky allowed my eye to range along the immense flat called King's-Sedgemoor, formerly covered with the waters of the ocean, and even now exhibiting marks of this derivation in several marine plants which are scattered over its face. These circumstances render it interesting, indeed, to the *naturalist*; but the *patriot* and *philantropist* also will not be unmoved, when he adverts to the events of its more modern history; when he recollects that this is the spot where the brave, mild, benevolent, but unfortunate Monmouth wept over the lost fortunes of a generous though hopeless cause; the dreadful scene where those ruthless instruments of a

tyrant and a bigot, Feversham, Kirke, and Jefferies, acted their horrid tragedies.*

I had omitted visiting Wookey-Hole in my journey down into Devonshire, intending to take it on my return, by crossing again from

* "The approach of the King's forces, under the command of the Earl of Feversham, was first discovered by Mr. William Sparke, a farmer of Chedzoy, who was at that time on the tower, and by the assistance of a glass, saw them coming down Sedgmoor. One Richard Godfrey, of the same parish, was immediately dispatched to Weston-Zoyland, to take a nearer observation; who, having informed himself of their strength, and the order of their encampment, ran to Bridgwater to apprise the Duke. A consultation being held, it was determined to assault the royal camp in the dead of the night. Accordingly, on Sunday the 5th of July, a little before midnight, the Duke's party marched out of Bridgwater, taking Godfrey with them for a guide; who conducted them through a private lane at Brandney, (known at this day by the name of War-lane) and passing under Peasy-farm, brought them at length into North-moor, directly in the rear of the King's army. Unluckily for the Duke, at this juncture a pistol was fired by some person unknown, which alarming the enemy, they soon put themselves in a posture to receive the attack.

"The action began on Monday morning, between one and two of the clock, and continued near an hour and half. Sixteen only of the King's soldiers were killed, (as appears from a memorandum entered at the time in the parish register at Weston) five of whom were buried in Weston church, and eleven in the church-yard. Above one hundred were wounded, and among them Louis Chevalier de Misiere, a French gentleman, who died of his wounds, and lies buried in the church at Middlezoy. On the part of the Duke, three hundred were killed in the field of

Glastonbury to the village of Wookey, according to my former route. But the attempt would have been absurd; the whole country was inundated, and one wide sheet of water spread itself over the flats, which not three weeks

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battle, and five hundred taken prisoners, of whom seventy-nine were wounded. They were all confined in Weston church, where five of them died of their wounds. About five hundred more were taken prisoners in the pursuit, and upwards of five hundred were apprehended afterwards by the civil officers and others.

" Immediately after the battle, the Earl of Feversham ordered twenty-two of the prisoners to be hanged on the spot; four of whom (to use the words of the register above-mentioned) were " hanged in gemmacess," i. e, in chains. The fate of one man in particular is too extraordinary to be passed over. This person, who was remarkably swift of foot, was prevailed upon, on condition of being pardoned, to entertain the General with an instance of his agility. Accordingly, having stripped himself naked, a halter was put round his neck, and the opposite end of it was fastened to the neck of a horse. They started at a place called Bussex-Rhine, and ran from thence to Brintsfield-Bridge, a distance somewhat exceeding half a mile; and though the the horse went at full speed, the man kept pace with him the whole way. But notwithstanding this exertion of his ability, and the terms of his agreement, the inhuman General ordered him to be hanged with the rest.

" The barbarity of the soldiers, who were employed in burying the slain, was yet greater. Several unfortunate men of the Duke's party, who lay wounded on the field, were thrown into the earth with the dead; and some of them endeavouring, with the little strength they had left, to crawl out of their graves, were prevented by the unfeeling soldiers, who dispatched them with their spades.

before I had traversed on foot. It was necessary, therefore, for me to pass through Wells, in order to reach this curious natural cavern.

The approach to Wookey-Hole is extremely fine. It exhibits a deep indentation in the south-western side of the Mendip hills; the back formed by a broad face of perpendicular rock, rising to the height of two hundred feet, naked towards the top, but enriched with foliage and vegetation, thickening as the cliff descends. The sides consist of rocky steeps, gradually rising from the bottom of the dell, till they unite with the cliff above, entirely co-

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"The next day a new scene of slaughter was opened at Taunton, where nineteen prisoners were hanged and quartered on the Cornhill, by order of General Kirk, who caused their bowels to be burnt, and their mangled limbs to be boiled in pitch, and set up in the streets and the highways. This execution was followed by several others of the like kind.

"The whole of those that died on this occasion, either in battle, in prison, or by the hands of the executioner, and those that otherwise suffered in their persons or fortunes, amounts to more than two thousand.

"It is observable, that a person who had assisted at the executions at Taunton, and on that account had acquired the name of *Tom-Boil-Man*, being at plough in a field near North-Petherton, a violent thunder-storm obliged him to seek for shelter; when retiring under an oak, and leaving a boy in the mean time to look after the plough, he had not been there but a few minutes, before he was struck dead by the lightning."

vered with wood. At the root of the rock which forms the back of this gloomy recess, a thundering torrent issues from an aperture of eleven yards in height, and fourteen in breadth, (impervious, however, on account of the stream) and discharges itself through the bottom, though rendered invisible by the deep shade of the trees which over-canopy it. The road to the cavern, made easy and commodious by Mr. Tudway, of Wells, creeps along the steep that forms the western side of this hollow, and ascending very gradually, reaches a ledge of rock, about eighty feet above the level of the stream below. Here a cavern opens its dire jaws " wide, dis- " continuous," the interior of which is safely secured, by a door well locked, from the intrusion of the profane. Into this aperture I was introduced, by a guide provided with candles and lanthorn. For the first twenty yards we pursued a range of galleries or passages, sufficiently lofty to allow our walking upright. The cavern then ascends, but narrowing its breadth, and decreasing in height, it quickly dips again, and spreads suddenly into a grand opening called the *kitchen*, so high as to present nothing to the eye but gloomy vacuity. To this succeeds another cavern, called the *parlour*, more spa-

cious and lofty than the former, where incrustations of whimsical forms, and more whimsical names, appear on all sides. Here superstition and imagination, working together, have made out a pillar of salt; an enormous petrified kidney; a turnspit dog; a flitch of bacon; and an old witch. The last apartment is called the *hall*, an immense hollow, stretching one hundred feet in length and breadth, the bottom consisting for the most part of sand, hard, fine, and dry. At the extremity of this the rock descends to a pool of limpid water, and forbids any further research into its secret recesses.

I had no doubt that a place, so well calculated for witches and hobgoblins, had been peopled with these active gentry by the inhabitants of its neighbourhood, and questioned my guide on the subject. He assured me, however, that the cavern had never but one inmate, an old witch, who had monopolized the whole of it to herself. She had been turned, years ago, into a stone, by a parson, as she was cooking a child in her kitchen, which she had stolen from the village; but he had heard his grandmother say, her father remembered the wicked old woman, as well as the tricks she played; how she would maim the cattle, bewitch the

young maids, and torture the old people with cramps and twitches. Fortunately for the lovers of legend, the tradition related by my guide, has been rescued from the insatiable maw of oblivion, by a modern poet, who has drawn out the oral tale into vision, and secured it to posterity by an elegant versification, the beauty of which will ensure its duration.* On comparing his story with the account above, you will find he has not availed himself of the *licentia poetarum*, to thrust any extraneous matter amongst the legitimate particulars.

THE WITCH OF WOKEY.

" In aunciente days, tradition showes,
" A base and wicked elfe arose,
" The Witch of Wokey hight:
" Oft have I heard the fearfull tale
" From Sue, and Roger of the vale,
" On some long winter's night.

* I am happy to bear this trifling testimony to the literary talents of a most estimable character; who, though well known to the publick as a scholar and a man of taste, would still have engaged a larger portion of fame and applause, had not his modesty induced him often to conceal the name of the author of such productions, as would add no mean laurels to any brow. The gentleman I mean is Dr. Harington, of Bath.

" Deep in the dreary dismall cell,
" Which seem'd and was ycleped hell,
" This blear-eyed hag did hide:
" Nine wicked elves, as legends faigne,
" She chose to form her guardian trayne,
" And kennel near her side.

" Here screeching owls oft made their nest,
" While wolves its craggy sides possest,
" Night-howling through the rock:
" No wholesome herb could here be found;
" She blasted every plant around,
" And blister'd every flock.

" Her haggard face was foull to see;
" Her mouth unmeet a mouth to bee;
" Her eyne of deadly leer.
" She nought devis'd, but neighbour's ill;
" She wreak'd on all her wayward will,
" And marr'd all goodly chear.

" All in her prime, have poets sung,
" No gaudy youth, gallant and young,
" E'er blest her longing armes:
" And hence arose her spight to vex,
" And blast the youth of either sex,
" By dint of hellish charmes.

" From Glaston came a lerned wight,
" And bent to marr her fell despight,
" And well he did, I ween:
" Sich mischief never had been known,
" And, since his mickle learning shown,
" Sich mischief ne'er has been.

" He chauntede out his godlie booke,
" He crost the water, blest the brooke,
" Then—pater noster done,
" The ghastly hag he sprinkl'd o'er;
" When lo! where stood a hag before,
" Now stood a ghastly stone.

" Full well 'tis known adown the dale:
" Though passing strange indeed the tale,
" And doubtfull may appear,
" I'm bold to say, there's never a one,
" That has not seen the witch in stone,
" With all her household gear.

" But though this lernede clerke did well;
" With grieved heart, alas! I tell,
" She left this curse behind:
" That Wokey nymphs forsaken quite,
" Though sense and beauty both unite,
" Should find no leman kind.

" For lo! ev'n as the fiend did say,
" The sex have found it to this day,
" That men are wondrous scant:
" Here's beauty, wit, and sense combin'd,
" With all that's good and virtuous join'd,
" Yet hardly one gallant.

" Shall then sich maids unpitied moane?
" They might as well, like her, be stone,
" As thus forsaken dwell.
" Since Glaston now can boast no clerks;
" Come down from Oxenford, ye sparks,
" And, oh! revoke the spell.

" Yet stay—nor thus despond, ye fair;
" Virtue's the gods' peculiar care;
" I hear the gracious voice:
" Your sex shall soon be blest agen,
" We only wait to find sich men,
" As best deserve your choice."†

I have brought you to Bath by the dirty back road of Chewton-Mendip, Clutton, &c. that I might, in the way, carry you into the *adyta* of a Druidical temple, which is esteemed one of the greatest curiosities in our country. It is to be found in the parish of Stanton-Drew, a village about ten miles from Bath, in a western direction. Wood,* who referred every thing ancient to the Druids and their superstitions, in his passion for Celtick archeology, has made a whimsical mistake with respect to the derivation of the name of this place. Misled by the similarity of sound, and his Druidical propensity, he gravely tells us, that Stanton-Drew means *the oak-men's town built with stones*; whereas, unfortunately, the affix Drew was never attached to the place till the twelfth of Edward III. when the manor came into the possession of the family of Drogo or Drew, one of which added his own name to that of the property,

† Perry's Relicks of Ancient English Poetry, vol. 1.
* Essay towards a description of Bath, p. 147.

in order to distinguish it from another Stanton, about six miles distant from this parish. So much for *antiquarian dreams!*—I would not, however, interfere with Mr. Wood's assertion, that the assemblage of stones I am about to describe to you was a Druidical arrangement: its similarity to the other circles of stones, which the *initiated* have united in pronouncing to be the temples of these holy jugglers, puts the point out of doubt. In a long field contiguous to the church, stand four distinct arrangements of vast natural stones. Three of these are circles; the fourth seems, originally, to have described a winding serpentine form, and to have served as an entrance to the circular arrangements. These, unlike most other Druidical remains of a similar magnitude, are not *concentric*, but attached to each other laterally; a stone of one circle reckoning amongst those which compose another circle. The largest circle measures one hundred yards in diameter, the second thirty yards, and the smallest fifteen yards; nine feet four inches in height, and upwards of seven yards in girth, are the measures of the largest of these stones. This material is a *breccia*, found in great plenty at and about Brandon-hill, in the neighbour-

hood of Bristol. If it were necessary for me to display learning, or to indulge hypothesis upon this monument of ancient superstition, I might import much of the former from Stukely and Borlase, who have mis-spent an huge profusion of erudition on senseless blocks and stones;* and much of the latter from good Mr. Wood, whose *flights* on Druidical architecture leave at a distance all other conjecturers on the same subject, that have gone before or succeeded him. But in my opinion the subject is not worth much disquisition, since the gigantick *wonders* of *Druidism* will sink into molehills, if they be viewed through the correcting medium of sober reason. What is there in these Celtick temples that should so greatly excite our admiration? Even in *Stonehenge*, the most stupendous of them, we see nothing that might not readily be effected by the united efforts of tumultuary numbers. The ponderous stones which compose it, would be found in the neighbourhood of Marlborough, amongst that assemblage of rocky fragments called the *Grey*

*" —— Knowledge is as food; and needs no less
" Her temperance over appetite, to know
" In measure what the mind may well contain;
" Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
" Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind."

Wethers; would be floated down the lesser Avon to Amesbury; conveyed to the spot they now occupy in the neighbourhood, with the assistance of rollers; and lifted to their present situation by the *inclined plane*; operations, which seem to include no particular sagacity in their designation, or difficulty in their execution; particularly when it is recollected, that the whole strength of the nation was directed to accomplish the work by the irresistible impulse of superstition. The boasted *learning* of the Druids, also, appears to have excited an astonishment with just as little reason as their architectural remains. It is impossible, that literature, science, and refinement, should be possessed for a long period of time by any distinct class of society, in any nation, without imparting some portion of their beneficial effects to the other orders of population; without civilizing, in some degree, the national manners, and improving the national taste. Britain, on the contrary, particularly in those parts which were more immediately under the influence of the Druids, was barbarous and unpolished; illiterate and savage; and even destitute of some of the necessary arts of life. The simple fact is, that the Druids knew more than the people, and,

consequently, as knowledge is only a relative term, may be said to have been *learned*, in comparison with them. Their wisdom, indeed, was but *cunning*; but this was enough to impose upon the savage ignorance of their contemporaries; and will be sufficient to mislead people more enlightened and better informed, as long as the love of *wonder* is a natural emotion, and the mind of man is more inclined to the passiveness of admiration, than the fatigue of ratiocination.

A local tradition exists in the neighbourhood of Stanton-Drew, respecting the Druidical circles above described. It relates, that as a young woman and her intended spouse were on the road to be married, attended by a numerous circle of their friends, some prophane jokes were passed on the approaching sacred ceremony, by the bridegroom and the party, when Heaven, indignant at the impiety, instantly arrested their course, and turned them into *stone*. The neighbouring rusticks regard the circles with superstitious awe, and hold it to be "devoutly true," that if they were to attempt reckoning the stones, instant death would punish their impious rashness.

"——— Religio pavidos terrebat agrestes
"Dira loci—Sylvam saxumque tremebant."

A road of some intricacy, but threaded with pleasure, for it pointed towards *home*, led me through Stanton-Prior, a quiet little village, chiefly remarkable for having been the birth-place of Dr. Gilbert Sheldon. This gentleman, by a series of lucky casualties, rose gradually, from the situation of a commoner, of All Souls-college, to the metropolitan chair at Canterbury. Fortune, it must be owned, did much for him, by thus conferring rank, power, influence, and importance, on him *during life*; but his own *princely munificence* effected more; for when he erected that temple of the muses, *the Theatre at Oxford*, during the period of his chancellorship, he raised a monument, which handed his name down with honour to *posterity*. With less vanity and more propriety than Horace used the boastful language, might he have inscribed on the classical architecture of his building;

" Exegi monumentum ære perennius
" Regalique situ pyramidum altius:
" Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
" Possit diruere; aut innumerabilis
" Annorum series, et fuga temporum."

A lofty eminence to the northward of the church, overlooking a vast extent of country,

exhibits some remains of Roman antiquity; the out-works of a camp, formed probably by *Ostorius*, who, about the year of our Lord 50, connected Monmouthshire and Bath, (the spot where the iron-ore was dug, and the *fabrica*, where it was manufactured for the legions) by a regular chain of forts, built upon the summits of the hills, which skirt the Severn and Avon rivers.* This would have engaged my attention; and Newton-park also, through which I passed, the residence of William Gore Langton, esq; about four miles from Bath, where elegant modern architecture has risen over the ruins of an old baronial castle, and where taste has introduced every variety of picturesque scenery, would have detained me to saunter thro' its beauties with that leisure and attention they so well deserve, had the afternoon been propitious. But howling winds, and pelting rain, impelled me to Bath as rapidly as I could advance; and truly saddening was the scene as I approached the city. The meadows around it, which in the expressive language of eastern poetry, "laughed and sang" with verdure and culti-

* Ostorius detrahere arma suspectis, cinctosque castris Sabrinum et Antonam fluvios colubere parat. Tacit. Annal. lib. xii. c. 31.

vation, when I set out on my expedition, were now invisible, and in their stead appeared one wide, extensive, troubled sheet of water; the labours of the husbandman were destroyed; the hopes of the harvest annihilated; a sky dark, and heavy with deluges of rain, curtained in the scene, whilst the sullen wind, and muttering thunder, "not loud but deep," proclaimed the tidings of augmented storms and aggravated horrors, present distress and future want. Amidst phænomena like these, it was impossible but that the mind should advert to the state of the *moral* world, and trace its strict analogy with the unusual appearances of Nature. The *resemblance*, indeed, is too striking to be overlooked; *there* war, horrid war, was committing the same havock amongst the social affections and happiness of mankind, as the indomitable elements were effecting *here*. *There* the same unnatural appearances were exhibited, in the universal hubbub of Europe, in the mortal opposition of Christian states, as the physical world displayed, in unremitted storms and ceaseless rains, amid the usual mild and gentle days of autumn.—Does the sceptick ask, *wherefore* are these deviations from order and happiness in the affairs of the world, and

in the face of Nature, permitted by Him, who is said to delight in regularity, to will the felicity of the creatures of his hand?—Tell him, that man has brought these evils on himself; that they are medicinal preparations, nauseous but salutary; necessary for those, who like the states of Christendom, *know so much*, but *do so little*.—Tell him, (in the language of a nervous writer) that as they are provoked by vices, so they are naturally productive of virtues; that they re-invigorate, by the task of trials, *that* tone of mind which was previously weakened by profligacy or inactivity; and in forcible appeals to the thoughtfulness of the soul, assert those powers of religion, which were nearly obliterated by luxury and sensuality.—Tell him, that the convulsions of Nature, and the enormities of man; the war of elements, and the subversion of empires, are all admirably permitted, and directed by the controlling influence of the Deity, to the great purpose of supporting the moral interests of the world, and impressing the heart with

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